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Thick mutton noodles with a seafood stew can warm up your winter.

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After taking photos, the children left with smiles on their faces.

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Old Cut Arouses New Controversy

Palace Museum accused of damaging ancient painting

By Zhao Pu

The quintessential Chinese painting *Festival of Qingming on the Bian River*, one of the highlights of the 72 National Treasures Exhibition in Shanghai last December, is again under media scrutiny, following claims that in the 1970's, restorers at the Palace Museum effaced part of the priceless masterpiece.

Wang Kairu, who has been reproducing antique Chinese paintings for over a decade, stated in an article published in *Xinmin Weekly* last month, that "Palace Museum staff mistakenly deleted a detail of Northern Song Dynasty artist Zhang Zeduan's *Festival of Qingming on the Bian River* while repairing the painting in 1973."

"They thought it was an ox, inharmonious and irrelevant to the painting's context, and simply scraped it off. They were wrong, it was a female donkey, braying to a rutting male donkey on the other side of the road," Wang said.

The Palace Museum has been quick to refute the charges, however. "What we deleted in the 1973 repair was not a part of the original painting," former deputy director of the Palace Museum Yang Xin responded in an interview with *Beijing Star Daily* earlier this month, "Wang doesn't really understand the painting at all!"

Donkey or ox?

Yanhuang Xuan is a famous art studio in Tangshan, Hebei Province. Owner Wang Kairu has been a calligraphy and painting enthusiast since childhood. He opened the studio in 1993, at the age of 53, and has since devoted himself to reproducing famous, ancient paintings.

In 1995, Wang went to the Forbidden City with the idea of reproducing the most precious item in the Palace Museum's collection, *Festival of Qingming on the Bian River*. Although it was not on public display, he convinced the museum authori-

ties of his sincerity and devotion to art over a number of visits, and was finally granted by the director permission to view the precious painting in 1997. "They also provided me with a full scale photograph of the painting," Wang told *Beijing Today* on Monday. His subsequent reproduction of the painting was based mainly on that photograph.

However while working on his copy, which he describes as "the most accurate to date reproduction of *Festival of Qingming on the Bian River*," he discovered a "serious problem" with the museum's preservation of the precious artwork.

The painting was acquired by the Palace Museum in the 1950s. In the course

of repair work to the painting in 1973, a small section 80 centimeters from the left edge was deleted. "Former deputy chief of the Palace Museum, Yang Boda, wrote in an introduction to the painting (in an album published in the 1970s) that they believed the part they deleted was a bel-lowing ox standing beside a tree, irrelevant to the painting's context," said Wang. "They made a mistake."

Wang researched several earlier reproductions of the paintings, and found that it was actually a female donkey standing under the tree, braying to a male donkey on the other side of the road. "It couldn't be an ox," said Wang. "Those specialists probably didn't understand this detail, be-

cause they are unfamiliar with rural life, they didn't know much about livestock."

Just a patch

Responding to Wang's challenge, former deputy chief of Palace Museum Yang Xin further clarified the deletion made to the painting 30 years ago, describing it as "routine maintenance."

"Repair of antique calligraphy and paintings is regular preservation work. *Festival of Qingming on the Bian River* has been repaired many times throughout history," said Yang. "We did delete a detail from the painting in the 1973 repair when we remounted it, which is no secret. But what we deleted was not a part of the original painting, it was a patch pasted to a

worn-out part of the painting during repairs made in the Ming Dynasty."

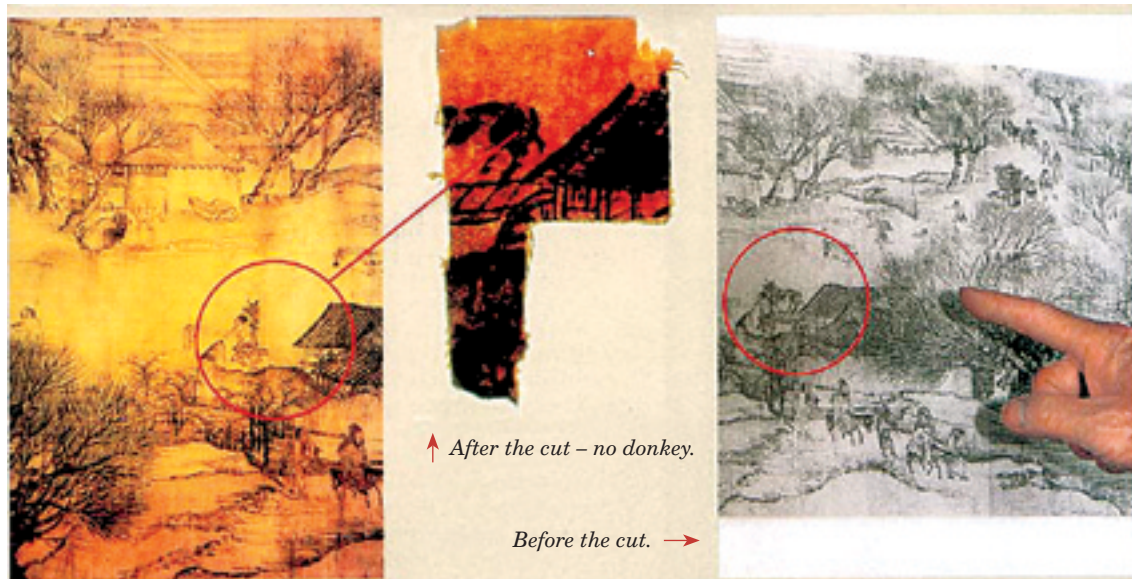
"The Ming Dynasty patch was worn out when we repaired the painting in 1973. As we couldn't determine whether the ox on the patch was copied from the original, decayed part, or just a work of imagination by the Ming Dynasty restorers, we deleted it from the painting," he said, adding that "The deleted patch is preserved in our maintenance archive."

"It's impossible the Palace Museum would make a careless or sloppy mistake in the preservation of such a national treasure," said Jin Yunchang, deputy director of the museum's Calligraphy and Painting Department. "We have a very strict system concerning the maintenance and repair of ancient calligraphy and paintings," he told *Beijing Today* on Monday.

"Before a calligraphy work or painting is repaired, there will be a specific plan. Usually the director of the relevant department submits a proposal first, which must be authorized by the director of the museum. Specialists will then draft a detailed repair plan after careful research of the object. Every step in the whole process is documented," said Yang.

Renowned writer and artist Feng Jicai, who himself painted a reproduction of the *Festival of Qingming on the Bian River* in the 1980s, told *Xinmin Weekly*, "I don't fully agree with Wang's stand, I think he is exaggerating somewhat. But there is no doubt that the Palace Museum made a mistake in deleting a part of the painting."

"They shouldn't cut the detail just because they considered it inharmonious or irrelevant, it was an irresponsible and destructive alteration," he said. "Even if it was a patch added in the Ming Dynasty, those restorers must have had their reasons for doing so. The Palace Museum apparently lacked respect for our cultural heritage."



Festival of Qingming on the Bian River, by Zhang Zeduan of the Northern Song Dynasty, is 528 centimeters in length and 24.8 in width. The scroll depicts a panoramic scene of Bianjing (Kaifeng, in Henan Province), capital of the Northern Song Dynasty, during the Qingming (Clear and Bright) Festival. It is both a gem of Chinese fine arts, and a valuable reference in the study of Song Dynasty social and cultural life.

By Shan Jinliang

October 12 marked the start of a new chapter in the life of former soldier Cui Zhangcheng.

On that morning, 48-year-old Cui was elected director of the Lugu Community Committee, in west Beijing's Shijingshan District.

Along with six deputy directors, he will lead the 37-member committee of Beijing's first autonomous community committee.

Ma Zhongliang, vice president of the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences told *Beijing Today* in a telephone interview Monday, "the historic breakthrough will hopefully promote the city's neighborhood management system and administrative reform."

Under the leadership of the Lugu Party Working Committee of the Communist Party of China, preparations for an indirect election for the Lugu Community Committee was launched in early August.

On September 18, 233 neighborhood committee representatives

were elected, aged between 23 and 74. On October 8, these representatives were issued with a list of 41 committee member candidates and their resumes. Thirty members were finally elected from this list on October 12, and Cui Zhangcheng won the title of director, with a total of 207 votes.

One of the thirty committee members is Ping Yaling. Ping, who is blind, won China's first Paralympics gold medal, in the long jump at the Los Angeles Paralympics in 1984.

"The election of disabled and migrant worker representatives are the two biggest breakthroughs," Ping told *Beijing Today*.

As one of the two migrant members of the committee, Jiang Changbiao, 29, from Sichuan Province, said he was happy to have been elected as a representative, and with the community member election result, but said it was pity that he had only been able to read the other candidate's resumes and

Neighborhood Reform Begins in Capital



Lugu neighborhood committee residents Li Yixiang (left) and Wang Zhirong cast their votes for the community representatives. Photo by Gao Qingxin

had no chance to meet and talk with them.

He told *Beijing Today* Tuesday that he would persist in seeking to improve the rights of migrant workers, particularly regarding issues such as social welfare and the high fees they must pay for their children's education.

Han Mengrong, secretary of the Lugu Disciplinary Working Committee told *Beijing Today* last Tuesday that three of the new neighborhood representatives are migrant workers, a relatively low number given that they represent 20 percent of the total population of the Lugu community.

"A certain percentage of places should be kept for migrant workers, to ensure that everyone in the community is properly represented and the results are accepted by the community," said Ma Zhongliang.

Jiang Changbiao also said that he hopes to see more representatives from the migrant workers in the future.

Ma said that at present, the Neighborhood Community Committee is fully financed by the district government, and points out that while this will not affect the autonomous operation of the committee, it is necessary that it becomes financially independent in the future.

In recent days, Cui and his colleagues have been busy designing a survey to determine what the problems of common concern are in the community, which will form the basis of their future work. Cui also said that they are designing a logo for the community, as a means of improving harmony, and that they are scheduled to discuss labor division with various district governmental departments.

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Beijing-Hong Kong Economic Cooperation Symposium Opens

By Wang Xiaoxiao

The Seventh Beijing-Hong Kong Economic Cooperation Symposium opened yesterday morning at the Beijing Hotel and winds up this afternoon.

Since June 29, when Hong Kong and the mainland signed the Mainland — Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, the two have found unprecedented opportunities for economic cooperation. The symposium will offer both cities a trade stage to develop

business.

The opening ceremony and presentation and a series of topical seminars have been organized for high-level government officials and business people from both cities to discuss cooperation opportunities. The series of seminar topics include Olympic-related and major projects, investment in Hong Kong, Hong Kong brand names, Beijing CBD real estate development, logistics, finance and legal aspects.

Beijing Daily reports that one of the seminars recommended 177 Olympic and other major investment projects totalling US \$9.7 billion.

As one of the most important economic cooperation partners and the third biggest export market for Beijing, Hong Kong had set up over 6,700 investment enterprises by the last half-year in Beijing and the total figure of contracted investment reached US \$17.14 billion.

Rise in Tax Revenue Reported

By Chen Si

The World Bank has issued a report stating that, "Although affected by the SARS epidemic and relatively slow increase in world trade, the Chinese economy was unexpectedly in good shape in January to June of 2003," according to Monday's *China Economy Times*. The organization's Chinese Economy Half Year Report was released on October 16.

The World Bank attributed the achievement to a rapid increase in momentum rarely seen in recent years, enjoyed by both investment and export, two major forces behind the country's economic progress.

Statistics released by the State Administration of Taxation (SAT) indicate that

China reaped tax revenue totaling over 1.5 trillion yuan (about \$180 billion) in the first nine months of the year, excluding tariffs and agricultural tax, up 21.7 percent year-on-year.

"China's target of seven percent economic growth set for this year is well within reach. China's economy remains in good shape, with a strong momentum for expansion," President Hu Jintao said in a keynote address at the CEO Summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum on Monday.

Qiu Xiaohua, SAT vice director general, said in a news conference held by the State Council on October 20 that the disadvantageous influence of SARS was mostly focused on tertiary industries

such as retail and transport in April and May. Due to the rapid decrease of the GDP growth rate in the second quarter, the loss to the Chinese economy over the whole year caused by SARS is estimated to be 0.8 percent.

Qiu noted that the Chinese government took many effective measures in time to counter the negative effects of the epidemic.

However, the elimination of the influence of SARS in the third quarter does not mean China can afford to ignore such problems. China should continue to strengthen its public hygiene system construction and promote the harmonious development of the economy and society, Qiu added.

Macao Enters CEPA Framework

By Xiao Rong

Markets in the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Region are becoming more closely integrated with the unveiling last Friday of the Macao version of the Closer Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), three months after the release of the Hong Kong version.

Starting from next year, 273 products locally made in Hong Kong and Macao will be exempt from tariffs and by 2006 a zero-tariff trade area in Asia might develop as further products enjoy the preferential treatment.

Macao is expected to greatly benefit from the economic pact, as about 50 of the 273 designated products are currently not locally made in the special administrative region, which could attract more investment from Portugal and other countries in the area. Moreover, CEPA may reduce the risks of the single economic structure in Macao, where over half of all tax revenues come from the gaming industry.

A joint committee will be established between the Chinese mainland and Macao to oversee the implementation of the pact, according to Chinese Vice Minister of Commerce An Min, who made the remarks at a joint press conference last Friday with Macao's Secretary for Economy and Finance Francis Tam Pak Yuen.

An said that both Hong Kong and Macao are free economies with many similarities, adding that the central government has granted them similar CEPA treatment with their differences taken into careful consideration.

The zero-tariff treatment on Macao-made products entering the Chinese mainland is expected to bring Macao an annual income of 10 million patacas (US \$1.25 million) and will help enterprises there further explore the huge mainland market, according to Tam.

Zhou Ligao, former rector of the University of Macao, holds that CEPA is a mutually beneficial agreement of trade and economic relations in that the development of Hong Kong and Macao is indispensable with the backing of the Chinese mainland, while inland enterprises march towards the international market.

CEPA consists of three major areas, namely trade in goods, trade in services and trade and investment facilitation, which are aimed at eliminating institutional obstacles in economic and trade cooperation between the Chinese mainland and Macao.

GE Industrial Park Switches On

By Sun Ming

The General Electric Medical System China Industrial Park, located in the Beijing Development Area, became operational Wednesday.

The industrial park, with a total investment of 26 million yuan (\$40 million) occupies 60,000 square meters. It can make medical diagnostic equipment, including computerized tomography scanners, magnetic resonance systems and x-ray equipment.

According to GE, the industrial park will double the throughput and export capacity of GE Medical Systems China.

Jeff Immelt, chairman and CEO of GE, attended the opening ceremony on Wednesday. He said in a speech that

the industrial park "will enable China to become one of the world's top production bases of CT scanners, by providing 25 percent of total global demand every year."

Immelt added that as a major part of GE's Chinese operation, GE Medical System is set to double its business volume in China in the next three years and will achieve a volume of \$2 billion by 2005.

Chih Chen, president of GE Medical Systems China, said at the opening ceremony, "China is replacing Japan as GE Medical Systems' Asian operating center. All of GE Medical Systems' Asian centers for business, finance, technology, information and marketing have moved to China."

Foreigners Drawn to Top Slots in Domestic SOEs

A recruitment campaign by six of China's biggest State-owned enterprises (SOEs) for senior managers has attracted 463 applicants from home and abroad.

About 28 percent of the applicants have worked or studied overseas, and 17 are foreigners from a dozen countries such as the United States and Canada, according to the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC).

It is the largest recruiting drive ever by the government body in charge of supervising SOEs' assets, reported Thursday's *China Daily*.

SASAC, which directly supervises the

191 biggest SOEs in China, launched the advertising campaign for its recruitment drive in mid-September as part of a management experiment.

The six enterprises, including China United Telecommunications Co. Ltd. and the State Development and Investment Corp., offered seven deputy general manager and chief accountant positions.

A SASAC spokesman said on Wednesday that after the assessment, only about 100 of the applicants have been deemed qualified to take part in the examination process, which will be held on Sunday. The final interviews are scheduled for November 8 to 9.

300 Million Yen Compensation Set for Mustard Gas Incident

By Chen Si

The Chinese and Japanese governments have reached an agreement last Sunday on the Qiqihaer mustard gas incident, according to *People's Daily*. The Japanese government will pay China 300 million yen (22.6 million yuan) in compensation.

The incident, in which one person died and 43 were injured, occurred when a cannister of mustard gas left by the Japanese army at the end of World War II was unearthed on August 4 by workers in Qiqihaer, Heilongjiang Province.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhang Qiyue said the incident seriously damaged the safety and feelings of the Chinese people, which could not be compensated by money. China has demanded the Japanese government fully realize the result and political influence caused by the incident and fulfil relevant promises it has made. In addition, Zhang expressed the hope that

effective measures would be taken to prevent the reoccurrence of such tragedies in the future.

Liu Aiping, the wife of Li Guizhen, who died as a result of exposure to the noxious mustard gas, said it was a positive step that the Japanese government had offered compensation, but added, "It is very important to apologize. No apology is actually an insincere attitude to history and reality." Liu has accepted an invitation of a Chinese lawyer delegation to go to Japan to appear in court and request an apology from the Japanese government.

Chinese Present Hu Jintao met Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in Bangkok, Thailand at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), which started October 20. Hu told Koizumi that the Chinese government hoped the Japanese government would undertake the responsibility of destroying all chemical weapons abandoned in China.

Draft Supervision Law Covers Foreign Banks

Supervision of foreign-funded banks, Sino-foreign joint venture banks and foreign banks' branches in China has been covered by a draft law on banking supervision.

The draft law was put forward for review at the fifth session of the 10th National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, China's top legislature, being held from Thursday to next Tuesday.

The Chinese bank watchdog will supervise the business of foreign-funded banks, Sino-foreign joint ventures and foreign bank branches in China in line with the law on banking supervision, according to the draft law, which was amended after the first round of discussion at the fourth session of the 10th NPC Standing Committee in August.

The overseas business of Chinese banks and Chinese financial institutions founded abroad will also come under the watch of the China Banking Regulatory Commission (CBRC), the country's banking overseer.

A number of legislators asked for clarification of who would be supervised when the draft law was first submitted for discussion, said Jiang Qiangui, vice chairwoman of the NPC Law Committee while elaborating on

the amendment of the draft law.

The draft law said the law would be applied on deposit-taking banks, including commercial banks, urban and rural community banks and policy banks, that are founded in China.

Non-banking financial companies such as asset management companies, trust and investment companies, financial companies and financial leasing services, would also be supervised in accordance with the draft law.

But if the government issued regulations on asset management companies and policy banks, the bank watchdog would follow, Jiang said.

The CBRC itself will be under the supervision of auditing and prosecuting organs, according to the draft law.

The draft amendment of the Law on the People's Bank of China and Law on Commercial Banks were submitted for a second round of discussion on Thursday as well.

Jiang noted that so far legislators would not add items on setting up a coordination mechanism among watchdogs of banks, securities, insurance and trust services though greatly urged by insiders.

(Xinhua)

Foreign Currency Sovereign Debt to be Issued in Hong Kong

By Wang Xiaoxiao

The Ministry of Finance is currently gauging how much interest international investors have in treasury bonds to service the foreign currency sovereign debt in Hong Kong. If they go ahead, it will be the first time for China to issue such bonds since 2001.

Six banks have been chosen as the underwriters. Goldman Sachs, Mer-

rill Lynch and JP Morgan from the US will take charge of the US dollar bond issue, while Swiss Bank Corporation, Deutsche Bank and Banque Nationale de Paris will answer for the issue of the Euro bonds.

The issue scale has not been decided yet, but is expected to include 10-year bonds worth \$1 billion and five or seven year bonds worth 500 million euro.

Central Bank Issues Foreign Exchange Management Regulation

China's central bank has issued a regulation on the management of foreign exchange agencies, which will take effect on November 1.

The regulation only allows foreign exchange agencies to change convertible foreign currencies in cash or travellers checks to Renminbi, but forbids foreign exchange purchase with Renminbi, said an official with the People's Bank of China (PBOC).

Domestic residents and Chinese nationals living abroad on Chinese passports should buy foreign exchange from approved banks with Renminbi when heading abroad.

Non-domestic residents, foreigners or residents from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, should go to the banks specified by the foreign exchange agency if they want to change Renminbi back to foreign currency. The amount of exchange should be no higher than the original amount of foreign exchange and the transaction should be performed within six months of the last foreign exchange transaction.

Foreign exchange agencies refer to those domestic corporations authorized by qualified domestic banks to have foreign exchange business by contract.

According to the regulation, all corporations registered in China could apply to banks with foreign exchange business for authorization of the business and concerned banks could authorize any domestic corporations the rights to start this business.

Those foreign exchange agencies set up before the regulation should make up the application procedure within two months after the regulation takes effect, said the PBOC official. If they fail to make up the application, they will not be permitted to undertake foreign exchange business in the future.

The regulation aimed to better satisfy the requirements of domestic residents and non-domestic residents in foreign exchange while keeping good order in China's foreign exchange market, said the PBOC official.

(Xinhua)

People's Bank to Expand Role in Combating Money Laundering

China's central bank, the People's Bank of China (PBOC), is likely to replace the Ministry of Public Security to organize the fight against money laundering, according to a new amendment draft of a major banking law.

The amendment draft of the Law on the PBOC was submitted Thursday to the fifth session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), the country's top legislature, for secondary deliberation.

The amendment draft noted that the central bank would organize actions against money laundering across the country and coordinate relevant government departments — tasks formerly undertaken by the Ministry of Public Security.

The central bank will also guide banks and financial institutions to combat money laundering and supervise a specialized fund for the actions, the amendment draft added.

The PBOC updated its security department to include fighting money laundering as one of its main tasks on September 29 this year.

A PBOC spokesman told Xinhua that the central bank would be in

place to dig out possible money laundering cases by monitoring huge flows of capital.

Three regulations against money laundering were issued by the central bank in January and became valid March 1.

The State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) formed a special department against money laundering as well in March this year while the inspection department on money laundering crimes under the Ministry of Public Security was set up in April last year. All these departments will work together under the central bank.

SAFE uncovered a total of 12,000 cases of illegal operations in foreign currencies with more than \$9 billion implicated last year. Seventy-eight underground banks were smashed and 519 law-breakers were arrested.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), \$600 billion to \$1.8 trillion is laundered in the world every year, equal to two to five percent of the global economy, and the amount increases by \$100 billion annually.

(Xinhua)

Chinese-made Bimmers Hit Local Streets



Driving away in a new, domestically-made BMW 325i sedan will cost around 470,000 yuan.

Photo by Bqb

By David Huang

New BMW 325i sedans, assembled in China by the domestic enterprise Brilliance China (Huachen) Automotive Holdings and Germany's BMW Group, debuted on the Beijing market last Saturday.

The cars carry total sticker prices of 468,000 yuan each and deliveries are expected to begin early next month.

According to Steven Shao, assistant manager of the marketing department of Beijing Yanbao Auto Service Co, around 100 people placed orders for the new sedans on the day of their local debut.

BMW 5-Series sedans put together in China by the same partnership will hit the domestic market by the end of this year priced significantly higher than the 325i cars.

Before the new cars were released,

some Chinese automotive experts said they would be priced under 400,000 yuan, a move predicted to have a serious impact on sales of other autos in the high-end bracket such as Audi A6 and A4 sedans, also domestically made at a VW joint venture factory in Jilin Province. The BMWs' near-500,000 yuan price tags have surprised many local dealers and squarely set them for equal competition with the Audis and other rival cars.

Competition in the luxury car market is set to get even fiercer, since on September 8, German-American auto giant DaimlerChrysler AG signed a long-awaited framework agreement formalizing strategic cooperation with Beijing Automotive Industry Holding for the production of Mercedes-Benz sedans and commercial vehicles in Beijing.

B&Q Breaks Into Construction Materials Market

By Shan Jinliang

B&Q, the UK's No. 1 home improvement and building materials retailer, made its first step into the Beijing market last Saturday by opening a large store in Sijiqing, Haidian District. The new store is the company's fourteenth in the Chinese mainland and the first foreign construction materials market in the capital. According to local media, the store received 80,000 visitors on its first day of operation.

B&Q is owned by Kingfisher Group, a *Fortune* Global 500 company.



Tens of thousands of Beijingers crammed into the new B&Q superstore in Sijiqiang on its opening day last Saturday.

Photo by Lou Qiyong

Yao Ming Settles Suit Against Coke

By Sun Ling

The lawsuit Chinese basketball star Yao Ming filed against Coca-Cola (China) on May 23 for image right infringement came to a surprise conclusion on October 16, four days before hearings were scheduled to begin.

The suit was filed after Coca-Cola launched a series of drinks this spring on which were painted photos of Yao Ming, Mengke Bateer and Guo Shiqiang, stars of China's national basketball team. Yao had already signed an endorsement agreement with Coca-Cola's rival, Pepsi-Cola.

On May 15, Pepsi issued a public statement claiming that Coca-Cola had used Yao's image without permission and demanding his picture be immediately removed from all of the company's products. Yao also asked for Coca-Cola to offer him a public apology and a symbolic 1 yuan in compensation.

Coca-Cola (China) has maintained it signed a contract with the agent of the Chinese national men's basketball team, Chinese Sports Management Company, giving it permission to use group images of at least three members of the national squad.

On the day the suit was withdrawn from Shanghai's Xuhui District Court, Coca-Cola released a statement from its global headquarters in Atlanta, US, explaining the move happened as the result of a "mediation agreement." The company cited its sponsorship of China's national team but acknowledged it was wrong for not asking Yao for permission before using his image.

"On the basis of the fact that Coca-Cola (China) did not seek Yao Ming's consent in advance of its use of his portrait and name on the packaging of its products, Coca-Cola (China) apologizes to Yao Ming," read the company statement.

Germany: Munich Reinsurance Set to Launch

By Tony Shaw

Munich Reinsurance, a leading international reinsurance company, is prepared to open its Beijing subsidiary late this week, according to a *Beijing Youth Daily* report last Friday. A press conference announcing the opening of the new local company is scheduled to be held in Beijing today.

Formation of the subsidiary was approved by the China Insurance Regulatory Commission this July, paving the way for the German enterprise to become the first international reinsurance company allowed to open a comprehensive reinsurance business in China. Munich Reinsurance has already established representative offices in Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

US: Metropolitan Life Insurance to Create Joint Venture

By Tony Shaw

Beijing Capital Airport Construction Group and

US Metropolitan Life Insurance (MetLife) announced in Beijing last Wednesday that they had agreed to establish a life insurance joint venture.

The Beijing-based company is named Sino-US Metropolitan Life Insurance for the time being. The insurer should begin operation by the time of next year's Spring Festival in February.

The capital's first joint venture life insurance company, CITIC Prudential Life Assurance, was established late August.

Canada: Sun Life Everbright Plans Beijing Entry

By Tony Shaw

Tianjin-based Sun Life Everbright Assurance China issued a statement last week that it is planning to enter the Beijing market. The company has been operating in Tianjin for one year.

According to a report in *Beijing Youth Daily* last Friday, the establishment of the company's Beijing subsidiary is expected to get official approval this week.

Founded through investment from Canadian Sun Life Financial Company and China Everbright

Group, the company is the first joint venture life assurance company in North China. To date, Sun Life Everbright Assurance China has earned 120 million yuan in assurance fees from over 40,000 clients in Tianjin.

China: First Domestic Insurer to Go Public in Hong Kong

By Tony Shaw

PICC Property and Casualty Company is scheduled to hold its initial public offering (IPOs) in the Hong Kong stock market on November 6, if all goes as planned.

The news was released by Wu Dingfu, chairman of the China Insurance Regulatory Commission, last Saturday. Guangdong Province-based *South Metropolitan Daily* reported on August 15 that the company's shares would have a ceiling price of HK\$1.7, opening room for earnings of up to HK\$5 billion, which would be the largest IPO in the Hong Kong stock market this year.

Figures issued by the commission this June revealed at least six other insurance companies have applied to hold their IPOs in Hong Kong.

'Tiger's' Roar Signals E-commerce Recovery?

By Shan Jinliang

Joyo, one of China's leading business-to-consumer electronic commerce companies, received 52 million yuan in its first injection of foreign funds from US Tiger Technology Fund on October 16 amidst the backdrop of the sharply rising share values of Chinese IT companies listed in US stock markets.

The investment is not only good news for Joyo, a shareholding company under Kingsoft Software Corporation, but also for the domestic e-commerce industry, which has posted consistent losses over the past 10 years.

The funds represented the second large investment made by Tiger Technology in a Chinese IT company within one month. In late September, Elong, a Chinese online travel company, got \$15 million in capital from that fund and Blue Bridge Capital, a Lithuanian investment enterprise.

IT industry analyst Fang Xingdong told the Xinhua News Agency on October 18 that the event marked the recovery of China's e-commerce field. At a press conference in Beijing last Saturday, Lei Jun, Joyo's chairman, said that Joyo has made another step towards its goal of becoming the Amazon.com of China.

However, Joyo is still far from realizing that dream, as its 100 million yuan in revenue last year hardly compares to the \$3 billion Amazon earned in the same period. The Chinese company only began earning profits in the second quarter of this year, in part because it moved its offices out of Beijing's expensive Zhongguancun area.

At the press conference, Lei added that before receiving the investment, Joyo was in bad need of capital to fund further development because of Chinese people's slow acceptance of e-commerce and under-financing from parent company Kingsoft, which focuses mostly on online gaming.

At the same time, Lei refused to give Tiger Technology, now the Joyo's third largest shareholder, a bigger piece of the company. Some analysts have expressed fears that because Tiger Technology is a venture capital fund, its investment could be withdrawn suddenly, fears reinforced by the foreign company's failure to assign a senior manager to Joyo's board of directors.

Since receiving the new investment, Joyo launched a new promotion last week of 1 yuan delivery charges.

Cathay Pacific to Commence Capital Services

Cathay Pacific Airways, Hong Kong's biggest airline, announced Tuesday that it will commence services to Beijing on December 12.

The airline will initially operate three return flights a week, departing Hong Kong every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday and returning from Beijing on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Cathay Pacific Director Philip Chen said, "For Cathay Pacific, being able to operate three services a week to Beijing is a very important step, but it is still just a start. Our flights will deepen links between Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland."

The launch of the flights is expected to bolster Hong Kong's position as a global aviation hub and primary gateway to China.

Approval for Cathay Pacific's operation of Beijing flights came alongside other initiatives aimed at supporting Hong Kong's economy and links with the mainland, including the implementation of the Mainland-HK Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) and allowing individual mainland travelers to visit Hong Kong without visas.

(Xinhua)

Fu Chengyu Named New CNOOC Head

By Shan Jinliang

Fu Chengyu, former deputy general manager of China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), was appointed to the position of the company's general manager last Saturday.

The appointment was announced by Wang Dongming, vice director of the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in Beijing last Thursday.

According to information released by the Organization Department, Fu has rich academic and management experience in the oil industry, having worked at CNOOC for nearly 20 years, as well as knowledge of the capital market and understanding of China's complex opening up policies.

Fu led successful campaigns to list two of CNOOC's holding companies on the Hong Kong stock market. "The main reason Fu was appointed is to get the third holding company listed," said an unnamed CNOOC senior official early this month.

A report in the *21st Century Business Herald* commented last Sunday that Fu's first step after assuming his new position would be to compete for greater share of the domestic market for CNOOC. This country's annual oil imports total nearly 80 million tons, a huge market mostly controlled by China National Petroleum Corporation, China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation and China National Chemicals Import & Export Corporation.

NTT DoCoMo Establishes Research Center in Zhongguancun

By James Liu

Nippon Telegraph and Telephone (NTT) DoCoMo, one of the world's largest mobile communications companies, established its third research center worldwide in the Raycom Infotech Park in Zhongguancun, Haidian District. The company invested \$5.3 million to set up the facility.

At a press conference held on October 16, NTT DoCoMo Vice President Masahiro Minomo said the center would focus on research and promotion of advanced mobile technologies for fourth-generation (4G) systems and beyond.

"We won't provide mobile service or sell mobiles in this country. What I will do here is research and develop 4G technologies and help China work out new standards for 4G," Minomo told *Beijing Today*.

LG, Honeywell to Make Advanced Appliances

By Shan Jinliang

LG Electronics and Honeywell signed a strategic cooperation agreement last Thursday for the development of Internet-connected home appliances for the China market. The move follows the forging of a similar partnership between Sanyo, Samsung and major domestic appliance maker Haier in late August.

According to last week's agreement, US-based Honeywell will provide LG with household automation and touch screen videophone technologies and the two sides will work together to develop high-end home appliances featuring Internet connections.

“Safe Hands” Trichet Takes Over



New ECB chief Jean-Claude Trichet

Brussels, October 16 (AFP) - EU leaders gave their formal blessing to Jean-Claude Trichet as the new European Central Bank chief, with the Frenchman pledging to uphold the “remarkable heritage” of his predecessor Wim Duisenberg. The 60-year-old former governor of the French central bank is due to replace Duisenberg for an eight-year term from November 1, following the green light from leaders of the 12 euro-zone nations at an EU summit here.

“I will ensure that I keep intact the remarkable heritage of my predecessor,” Trichet said of the Dutchman, who was the first president of the ECB and oversaw the introduction of the single European currency in 1999.

The incoming ECB chief vowed to maintain “confidence in the euro... and the effective functioning of the entire European monetary team” in Frank-

furt’s Eurotower.

Trichet’s candidacy was long in doubt after he was named as a defendant in a false-accounting scandal at Credit Lyonnais, stemming from the early 1990s when he was director of the French treasury and the bank was still in state hands.

His name was not cleared until June this year, compelling the 68-year-old Duisenberg – who is retiring after five years in Europe’s top banking job – to stay on longer than he had originally wanted.

But European Commission president Romano Prodi described Trichet’s performance at the Bank of France as “outstanding” during difficult times, and said he had not seen a better CV for the European post.

Already a member of the ECB’s decision-making governing council, Trichet has a reputation as a fierce anti-inflation fighter.

Analyst’s Take:

Abrupt devaluation of the dollar may be the biggest threat to the euro. It’s commonly believed that the dollar cannot maintain its current level. As soon as central banks all over Asia begin to undersell dollar reserves, this will cut the dollar exchange rate. If the dollar devalues significantly, it will harm competition in the euro zone. On the other hand, it would also increase pressure on Trichet to provide incentives for

economic growth.

Many problems with the ECB, especially the accusations that it’s unresponsive, are caused by decision methods based on common agreement. In the ECB, currency policy is not decided through voting but through long-term discussion. In the beginning of the operation of the ECB, common agreement was very important for political reasons. But now times have changed and there are new problems to face. So Trichet needs to enact a regulation allowing decisions to be

reached by voting in the council, so the process can’t be hijacked by political motives.

Trichet should carry out reformation even if it incurs opposition from members of the council. Otherwise, he will find himself stuck with a defensive policy. If he carries out the reformation, it is very possible that the ECB could become one of the most successful EU organizations.

— Zhang Yan, researcher from Beijing Foreign Exchange Research Department

Tokyo Motor Show Opens

Chiba, Japan, October 23 (Japan Today) - The 37th Tokyo Motor Show opened to the media Wednesday ahead of its public opening on Saturday, with some 600 passenger cars and motorcycles from 60 companies from around the world on display.

Foreign carmakers are introducing 50 models that have never been seen in Japan before.

The show comes amid difficult times for the motor industry, as illustrated by the third quarter results recently announced by the Big Three US automakers.

As if to blow away economic blues and soothe the spirit, the Japanese firms peppered their presentations with such buzzwords as “stylish, insightful and spirited” and “comfort, open space and stress-free ambience”.

Some of them even emphasized the importance of paying attention to the “emotions” of motorists. Xinhua Photo



Google Fined in France

Paris, October 19 (Reuters) - A French court has ruled against Internet search powerhouse Google in an intellectual property rights case that could have far reaching technological and financial implications for Internet search firms.

The civil court in Nanterre, near Paris, fined privately held Google 75,000 euros for allowing advertisers to link text Internet advertisements to trademarked search terms and gave the company 30 days to stop the practice, even though it’s a common feature of Internet search services.

The ruling, handed down earlier this week, is believed to be the first in which the owner of a trademarked term successfully sued an Internet search service over the practice of allowing advertisers to use protected terms in text ads.

If it is upheld on appeal and validated in other countries, the decision could force the search services to pre-screen search terms for trademarks before letting advertisers use them.

In the trademark case, the owner of the name “Bourse des vols” (Market for Flights), an Internet travel agent, wanted Google to stop allowing competitors to include “Bourse des vols” as a term that would generate an

advertisement and link to their own site that Internet searchers could click on.

Google had refused, arguing its French arm was not responsible, that the term bourse des vols was not protected by a valid trademark and that the issue was technological and could not be resolved.

But the court found for the plaintiff on all three issues, said Fabrice Dariot, who owns the trademark to “Bourse des Vols” and sued Google. Dariot said that while the fine was small, the decision could be important.

“It was as though the Internet and the real world were two different worlds, but this ruling shows that there is only one world,” he said in an interview. “It shows that the Internet will have to respect intellectual property rights.”

The result of the decision could be that any time the term “Bourse des Vols” was typed in, only ads for that specific site could be posted with the search results, Dariot said.

California-based Google said it would appeal the decision and declined further comment.

But in the meantime, Google will have to make the changes while the appeal is underway or face fines of up to 1,500 euros for each infraction, Dariot said.

Healthy Pizza, What Next?

October 16, (Motley Fool) - According to market researchers NPD Group, Americans lost weight last year and ate healthier. Meanwhile, Yum! Brands’ Pizza Hut introduces Fit ‘N Delicious pizzas. Given that the surprise of the study was that people are interested in a balanced diet, a fit pizza looks on target.

With 15% less fat than the chain’s Thin ‘N Crispy pizza, the Fit ‘N Delicious comes with a generous amount of tomato sauce and half the cheese, with either ham or chicken as options. And you get two of the following: green pepper, red onion, mushroom, jalapeno, tomato, or pineapple.

Whether a pizza with extra tomato sauce needs tomato as a topping is a question for another day, as is “who ordered that jalapeno and pineapple pizza?” Yuck! No worries. Early sales success will probably be determined by how the pizza looks in TV commercials and print ads.

Give Pizza Hut credit for innovation. If America’s tastes are truly changing, this is a good move. Another NPD Group study shows that pizza has grown in 10 years from the eighth most served main dish at dinner to second. If it takes a Fit pizza to grow the market from here, Pizza Hut is ready.

And really, Fit pizza is low risk. It doesn’t require new ingredients, so there are few changes at the local level except for signage. If it draws from the weight-conscious masses that would never touch a regular pizza, those are incremental sales that will fatten earnings.

Analyst’s Take:

It is a good trend for the US fast-food chains to reduce the amount of fat in their food though it may only be a promotion activity. US researchers have released reports about unhealthy fried food in the last few years, and people have begun to limit their consumption of it. One direct result is that the worldwide French fries consumption has fallen to its lowest point in 15 years, and the US is the biggest consumer of fries. Fortunately, Pizza Hut felt the risk despite its surging pizza sales and is trying to head off the possible decline in sales.

The trend is also happening in China as more and more Chinese parents are persuading their kids not to eat fried food. Now 16 percent of Chinese children eat more fat than they should and are at risk of becoming overweight. Compared with the US, Chinese people’s awareness of healthy eating is relatively low.

I visited a Pizza Hut restaurant near Beihang University in Haidian District on Monday, and I was told they have not begun providing the healthier pizzas, but I think the trend towards healthier food will gradually catch on, including the other fast-food chains like KFC and McDonald’s.

— He Jiguo, associate professor, dean of Nutrition and Food Security Department, China Agricultural University

GE Eyes China’s Financial Services Market

Shanghai, October 23 (Reuters) - General Electric, one of the world’s most profitable companies, expects to generate \$3 billion in sales from China this year and wants to invest in the country’s vast financial services sector, Chairman and Chief Executive Jeff Immelt said on Thursday.

“I would like to see in the next one, two or three years GE making an investment in financial services in China,” Immelt said at the opening of a \$64 million GE technology research center in Shanghai.

The U.S. titan is moving further into high-growth areas amid weakness in traditional industrial businesses such as plastics. Its GE Capital arm, which offers credit cards, insurance and other financial services is a big profit spinner for the Fairfield, Connecticut-based firm.

China has said it will allow foreign banks full access by late 2006.

Kodak Defends Strategy

New York, October 22 (Reuters) - Eastman Kodak Co. on Wednesday posted a 63 percent drop in third-quarter earnings and defended its plan to shift away from its declining film business and into digital pictures despite an outcry from disgruntled investors.

Rochester, New York-based Kodak, the world’s top maker of photographic film, which last month announced a dramatic strategy shift towards digital printing and away from traditional film, said profit in its key photography and health imaging segments fell, despite sales gains.

Some dissident investors, led by activist fund management company Providence Capital, gathered in New York on Wednesday to discuss asking Kodak to open the books on its plan of action. It also was going to suggest to the company that it seek feedback from shareholders.

Australian Agency Selling Land on the Moon

Melbourne, October 15 (AP) - Now here’s a gift that’s really out of this world. A new real estate agency, Lunar Realty, based in the southern Australian city of Melbourne, opens its doors Tuesday selling one-acre blocks on the moon for 59 Australian dollars (US\$40) and 10-acre “lifestyle” blocks for A\$298 (US\$202). Businessman Paul Jackson, 33, announced Monday he had bought the Australian rights to sell the land from Nevada-based entrepreneur Dennis Hope.

Hope has been cashing in since 1980 on what he said was an apparent loophole in the 1967 United Nations Outer Space Treaty that barred nations from laying claim to the moon but said nothing about individuals.

Hope registered a claim for the moon and planets with the United States, the Soviet government and the United Nations and, operating as Lunar Embassy, has been selling plots of extraterrestrial real estate ever since.

Jackson said two million people from 180 countries have bought a slice of the moon since 1980.

Euro Disney Confirms Wider Loss Forecast

Paris, October 20 (AP) - Euro Disney SCA confirmed a news report that its forecast results showed a sharply wider net loss for the fiscal year ending in September, but said the figures had been leaked illegally.

The company, which operates two theme parks outside Paris, issued the statement Monday in response to French newspaper *Le Parisien*’s report Friday that the full-year loss was seen widening by 75 percent to 58 million euros (\$67.6 million) from 33.1 million euros the previous year. The figures came from a report done for Euro Disney by the French accounting consultancy Arec. According to the French daily, the total number of visitors to the two parks, Magic Kingdom and Walt Disney Studios, fell to 12.5 million - down almost 5 percent compared to the previous year. The paper said the Arec report partly blamed the decline on falling foreign visitor numbers due to the Iraq war and the outbreak of SARS.

New Panel Proposed for Audit Rulemaking

New York, October 22 (Reuters) - International regulators and a group representing accountants globally on Wednesday proposed establishing a new board to oversee the accounting industry’s job of setting rules for auditors, as part of reforms to restore confidence in the scandal-hit profession.

The new board will oversee the audit, independence and ethics rules set by the International Federation of Accountants, which represents accounting organizations worldwide and develops global auditing rules.

The board, to be called the Public Interest Oversight Board, will comprise 10 members from regulatory bodies like the European Commission, the World Bank, the International Organization of Securities Commissions and the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision.

Space Success Sparks Trademark Race

By Yu Shanshan

The return of China's first astronaut, Yang Liwei, and his space capsule the Shenzhou V last Thursday has sparked a heated race to cash in on the hero's name and new fame.

Wang Zhijian, who has earned a reputation for registering many lucrative trademarks in Hunan Province, turned in an application to the Trademark Office of the State Administration to register "Shenzhou V" as a trademark for an agricultural seed and gardening product brand in May. That application is now in the administration's standard 18-month checking period.

Soon after the identity of China's first man to reach space was made public, Wang also filed an application to register a trademark for "Yang Liwei." Last Friday, he was quoted in the Chengdu, Sichuan Province-based *West*

China City Daily as saying, "I know that because he is in the army, Yang Liwei cannot conduct private business, but it would be a waste for no one to benefit from his great value!"

Another person, Shi Jing, has filed for a trademark in Sichuan for a name that is pronounced "Yang Liwei" but uses different characters. That application has already passed the Sichuan trademark office's initial acceptance procedures.

According to national regulations, regional and central trademark offices can take up to 15 days after filing to decide whether to accept an application and then should conduct 18 months of investigations and checks to determine if that application is worthy of trademark registration and certification.

Last Saturday, sources from the Trademark Office of State Administra-

tion for Industry and Commerce confirmed that the Beijing Space Medicine and Medical Engineering Research Institute, where Yang Liwei trained for his historic flight, turned in an application last Saturday afternoon to register the astronaut's name as a trademark for some of their products.

Officials from Yang's hometown of Suizhong, Liaoning Province, are also entering the fray. According to the head of Suizhong county, Xia Yu'en, the Suizhong government has applied to register "Yang Liwei" as trademark for locally-grown white pears. "Since Yang has become a world-famous figure, we are trying to think of the best ways to make full use of the power of his name. Next, we will consider how to use his name to attract more investment in the local market," Xia said.

Liu Xiangying, secretary of the

county Party committee, told *Beijing Today* he is advocating that Suizhong construct memorials to Yang and his craft and make the astronaut's former home a tourist attraction.

Plenty of people are also hoping to secure ownership of the "Shenzhou V" name. One of the earliest to take this tack was Wu Bin of Chengdu, Sichuan. He has already designed a trademark pattern for the name and told the local media of his plans to apply the trademark to clothes, shoes and health food products.

However, Xun Xianzong, vice director of the trademark office of the Chengdu Industrial and Commerce Bureau, cast doubt on Wu's chances. "Shenzhou V is a special name that has significant political meaning. So far, there is no precedent for the use of such names as trademarks," he said.



Ping'an Avenue Hosts Mass Wedding

By Sun Ming

More than 3,000 artists and tourists from 52 countries attended a parade on Sunday in Ping'an Avenue, during which over 100 couples representing those nations tied the knot in a massive collective wedding ceremony.

Under the theme "Beijing's tomorrow will be more beautiful", the parade was a key event in the Sixth Beijing International Cultural and Tourism Festival which kicked off last Friday and ended on Monday.

Photo by Qian Bingge

Shanghai Officials Accept One Dollar Salaries

By Yu Shanshan

Shanghai has earned a name for learning quickly from Western examples, a reputation solidified by the government of the city's Xuhui District last Sunday. On that day, three Xuhui leaders signed one-year contracts and accepted their annual salaries in lump sums of \$1 each. According to an announcement made by the Xuhui government, such payment is common practice for officials in many developed countries.

"We chose government employment and the \$1 annual salaries because we hope to adopt experiences we've had in Western countries here at home," said Tang Haisong, one of the three part-time officials, at a press conference in Shanghai last Thursday.

Tang, CEO of Etang Information Service Company, holds an MBA from Harvard University and formerly worked as a business analyst for McKinsey & Company for three years. He and Qian Xuefeng, vice president of Soft Bank China Venture Capital and holder of a PhD from Yale University, have assumed positions as vice directors of Shanghai's Foreign Economic Relations Commission. The third self-sacrificing official is Huang Yong, president of SME Club Consulting (Shanghai) Co., Ltd., and now the vice director of Shanghai's Investment Center.

The three positions were specially created for the men, who will be responsible for giving the district government suggestions, helping attract investment and pushing forward the development of certain industries. They will also be asked to participate in district projects and provide feedback and consulting on development plans.

According to Yuan Zhaoyu, media officer for the Xuhui district government, inviting experienced executives to take government positions with symbolic salaries is intended as a means of introducing new information and methods related to commerce, technology and public administration. That district government's ambitious plans also call for sending 100 young officials abroad to study and employing foreign interns.



Clinic, Newspapers Help Girl Realize Dream

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Over the past several weeks, the public and the domestic press have again rallied to the aid of 25-year-old Tianjin native Zhang Jing. Thanks to the efforts of *Beijing Star Daily* and some other papers, the home-ly young woman received a second session of free cosmetic surgery in Tianjin on Monday to give her

confidence as she prepares to start a new job at a retirement home.

Zhang has had a difficult life and comes from a poor family. Before undergoing the operations, she told domestic newspapers that she always wanted to share in her family's burden, but never had a chance because no company or manager would hire her after meeting her face-to-face. The media's campaign to publicize her struggles paid off when the Tianjin Tongji Cosmetic Clinic responded by offering Zhang free cosmetic surgery so that she would no longer be subject to such discrimination.

She politely turned down their first offer on September 17, afraid that her poor health would put her at risk if she underwent surgery, but changed her mind and first went under the knife five days later.

"I've been dreaming of changing my looks my whole life, not to be beautiful, but just to look more common. I've tried to save money for this kind of operation, but never got close to how much I needed. So I'd like to greatly thank the doctors who did this for me. It's like the realization of my dream," she was quoted as saying in the Tianjin-based newspaper *Meiri Xinbao* after the first operation.

According to the plan of the clinic's doctors, Zhang Jing will undergo operations to shape her eyebrows, lips and forehead.

Capital Runs Major Marathon

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Last Sunday morning, over 25,000 professional and amateur runners from 38 countries turned out for the 2003 Samsung Beijing International Marathon, the top marathon in China. The race started at 8:30 am from Tian'anmen Square and ended at the Olympic Sport Center.

The men's winner was Ian Syter of South Africa, who crossed the finish line with a time of 2:07:49, and a native woman, Sun Yingjie, won the women's title with a time of 2:19:39.

Aside from the full marathon, the event also included five kilometer, 10 kilometer and half marathon races, all of which were run under the theme of "Treasuring life, running towards health."



Coins and Stamps Commemorate Spaceflight

By Wang Xiaoxiao

On October 16, the same day that the Shenzhou V manned spacecraft successfully took off, a series of commemorative coins were launched in China. At the request of the Chinese government, a limited run of 10,000 of the silver coins were minted by the Perth Mint in Australia and Cook Island mint in New Zealand.

There are two kinds of coins in the series. Both have the face of Queen Elizabeth II on one side, the other side filled with either a picture of the Shenzhou V or its Changzheng ZF rocket. The high-purity coins carry the denomination of one New Zealand dollar.

On the domestic market, China Post issued a series of stamps and a first day stamp cover called "The first success of China's manned spacecraft" the same day. The two stamps in the series are named "Heroic Bearing" and "Triumphant Return" and are available at post offices around the country.

Local Competition Allows Foreigners to Mug on TV

Beijing Television is preparing to film the 2004 running of its "Arts from Our Land" competition, in which foreign residents in the capital will be invited to show off their talents at traditional Chinese art and performance forms, such as singing, balladry, cross-talk, martial arts, dance and opera.

Participants will be judged in three areas - Chinese language abilities, skills challenges and art performance. Awards will be given to the top three finalists, along with special recognitions such as "most popular" and "most photogenic."

Beijing TV is currently accepting applications from interested foreigners. Entry forms should be sent to the station before November 20.

For more information, check the website <http://yule.sohu.com/caiyi/>, call 6842 9614, or send email to xuejing@btv.com.cn or caiyidasai@yahoo.com.cn.

Suspect Persuaded to Surrender by Short Messages

By Dong Nan

Through a series of 34 mobile phone short messages, Hu Jianguo, a police officer from the Dazhongsi Market Police Station, successfully persuaded an escaped suspect to turn himself in to the authorities.

On October 4, a vendor at the Dazhongsi market called the police to report the theft of over 40,000 yuan worth of cigarettes from his store. Clues culled from consequent investigations pointed towards a man from Shandong Province, surnamed Guo, who worked at a nearby stall. Soon after the police began looking into the crime, Guo disappeared and broke off all contact with his former boss and other relations.

However, Guo's former employer was able to pass on the suspect's mobile phone number to the police. That phone was turned off when Hu Jianguo first called, but the persistent policeman decided to send Guo repeated short messages in the hopes he might turn on the phone and then be persuaded to come out of hiding.

Over a span of three days, Hu send Guo nearly three dozen messages with such statements as, "Please give yourself up. Your sentencing for the crime could be commuted, and the law is fair," "It will only help your future if you come back" and "You don't want to live as a thief on the run forever, do you?"

Eventually, Hu's efforts paid off. "I am in Jiamusi [in Heilongjiang Province]," Guo wrote back on October 10. Hu quickly replied, "If you turn yourself in, according to the law, your sentence is sure to be commuted."

Soon after, Guo called his boss and family to tell them he was going to surrender.

In the heavy rain of midnight on October 12, Guo returned from Jiamusi and appeared at the Dazhongsi Market Police Station. Later that day, he helped the police recover all the cigarettes he had stolen and hidden.

According to Hu, Guo confessed to feeling lonely and afraid when he fled to Heilongjiang and said that the policeman's messages moved him and persuaded to come back to Beijing.

"At first, we planed to arrest Guo at the railway station or track him down through the national police network, but when he contacted us, we decided to trust him and wait for him to turn himself in at the police station," said Shan Yaguang, an officer at the Dazhongsi Market Police Station. "We recorded Guo's whole story in his file. According to national criminal law, his sentence should be commuted."

This is not the first time that Hu has been able to bring in a wanted suspect through short messages. According to some local media reports, Hu used such methods to successfully persuade two men suspected of assault to turn themselves in this June and July. Both men received commuted sentences.

By Zhao Bin

Who's in the net?

The survey was conducted in Nandingfu Village, Xinglongzhuang Village and Taoyuan Village, in Pinggu district in the east outskirts of Beijing. Taoyuan Village is known as the first "Internet Village" in Beijing.

The survey selected 67 local citizens, aged between 16 and 55. More than half of the respondents had received senior high school education.

The questionnaire included 32 questions, ranging from respondents' habits in using the Internet to the problems they encountered in the process. It aimed to find out just how useful the Internet was and how to improve its future performance.

According to the survey, the two main methods used by local citizens to access the Internet were using cable modem setups at home and using computers in the Pinggu Information Center established by the local government. The former service costs each family 50-yuan per month for unlimited use, while the latter is free of charge.

Pinggu Information Center was set up in December 1998 by the local government to develop platforms for videoconferences, online trading and long-distance education. The center also presides over the construction of the Internet and intranet for the whole district. According to Pinggu government, by 2003, 17 towns in the district and 183 villages had been linked to the host server in the center. 59 enterprises in the district now have their own websites.

Wu Yulin, the chief director of the center, told *Beijing Today* that as well as installing equipment for the local network, the center launched initiatives to help locals become more computer literate. They offered courses and offered low-priced PCs for families. "For an experimental promotion in 1998, we provided 30 free PCs for families who were willing to learn new information skills," Wu said. "We encourage people to use the service at our sub-centers in the villages as well."

Currently, less than one third of local families own personal computers, a comparatively low rate. The average monthly income for families is 2500 yuan.

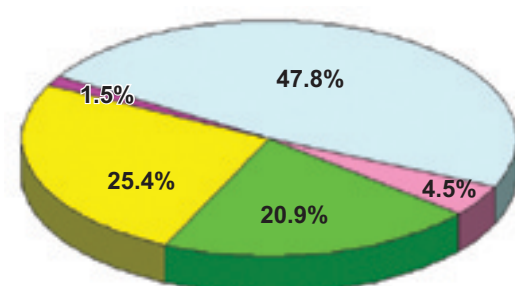
Useful?

Nearly half of all the respondents said they used the Internet frequently, at least once every fortnight. People tend to use the service at

Catching Up on the Net

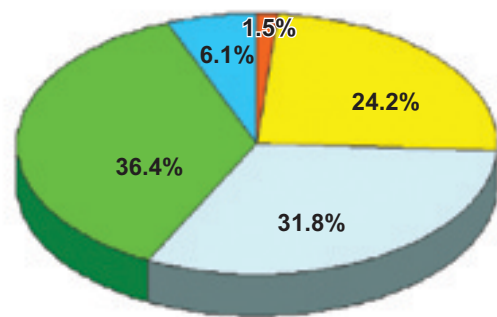
There's generally assumed to be quite an information gap between the city and the provinces, even between the city center and communities in the outskirts. But if Pinggu district in the suburbs of Beijing is any guide, the Internet appears to be closing the gap. A survey titled *Uses of the Internet in Rural Areas of Seven Countries in Asia*, conducted by Beijing Broadcasting Institute, shows the significant changes the Internet has brought to Pinggu peoples' lives.

Frequency of surfing



once a week or less
once a month
once or more in 15 days
no fixed time
any other

Importance of the Internet



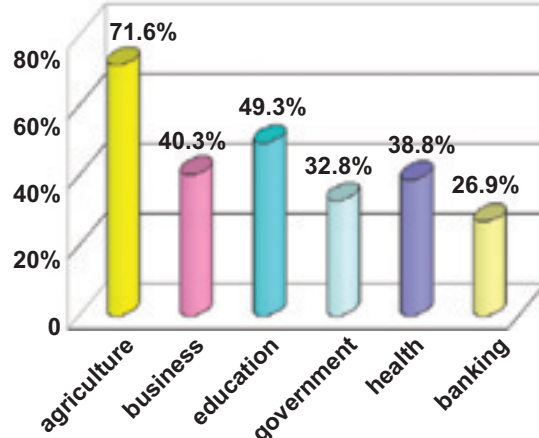
not useful
somewhat useful
moderate use
very useful
vital

weekends and in the non-farming season. More than two thirds said their average surfing time was between one and two hours.

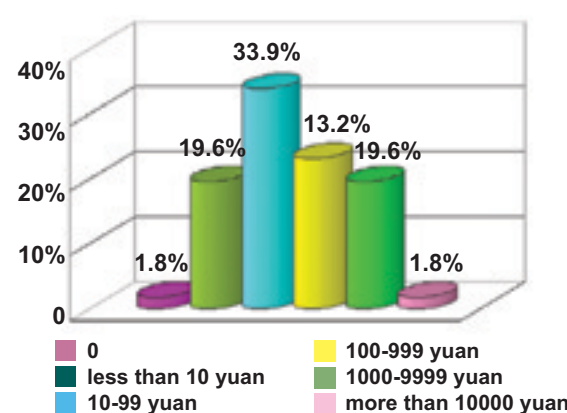
People had numerous different reasons for using the Internet. More than two thirds focused on obtaining agricultural information; nearly half wanted business information. "We provide users with a platform to trade their products online," says Wu. "They can acquire market information easily on the website we built."

Around half of the surfers use education functions, such as downloading supplementary material from local school's host server. Wu explains how the system works. First, 32 high schools and 28 primary schools in the district have been linked through the intranet. All the terminal users can share the schools' teaching materials. Second, all the teacher's profiles are in the database. Students can also get onto the school's server via the Internet and conduct instant

Purpose of using the Internet



Increase of income from the Internet



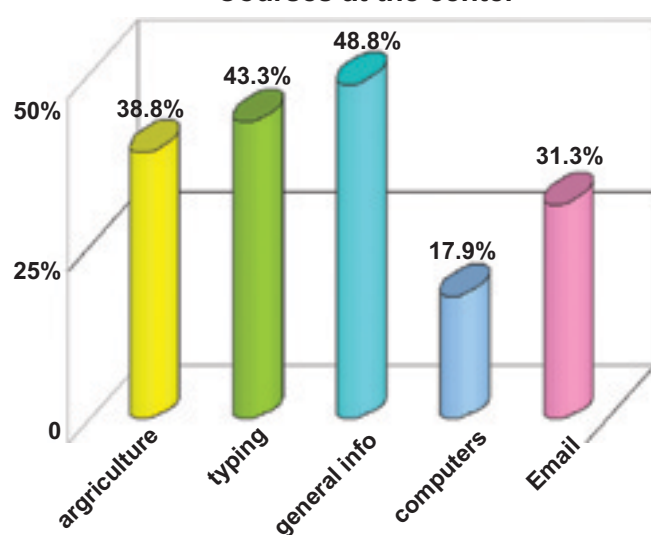
0
less than 10 yuan
10-99 yuan
100-999 yuan
1000-9999 yuan
more than 10000 yuan

Q&A with their teachers online by using microphones and earphones. "Thanks to this interactive system, our students could continue their classes at home during the SARS crisis," added Wu.

About one third of the users were also interested in finding out about new policies at government websites and about a third looked into health issues. More than a quarter are already using online banking services.

98.5% of the respondents

Courses at the center



said the Internet plays a useful role in their lives. "The online trade in peaches reached 1300 tons last year in Taoyuan Village," says Wu. According to the survey, nearly 20% of Internet users increased their income by more than 1000 yuan last year.

Happy surfers

94% of all respondents said they learned how to use a computer through training programs at the county's information center. The center aimed to help people with different skills, varying from getting some more knowledge about agriculture to using email. Nearly half of the respondents wanted to learn to input Chinese and use the Internet to search for business information. More than one third wanted to advance their knowledge on marketing.

"We aim to increase their income by showing them how to use online trading," explained Wu. "We didn't intend to make everyone become a software or hardware specialist. Instead, we teach them how to get supply and demand information online."

Only two of the people in the survey were unhappy with service at the center. "The staff here are friendly and willing to offer assistance," said one

of the respondents, a villager from Xinglongzhuang who has become an Internet regular.

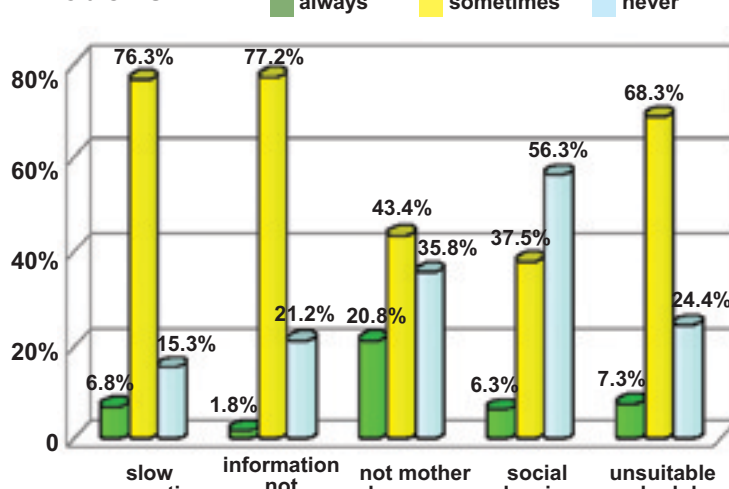
Problems

The main problems people have are the slow connection to the Internet, the lack of or inability to find the information needed, the fact that so many websites are in English and the unsuitable opening hours of the Pinggu Information Center.

Three quarters of the respondents said they sometimes encountered connection problems. Three quarters also said they could not easily find what they were looking for. 70% complained that the center's opening hours were inadequate and inconvenient for their schedule. "I need to work in the field in the daytime, and when I get to the center in the afternoon, it's closed," said one respondent, who lives one kilometer from the center. The current opening time is between 9 am and 5 pm, standard government office hours which the center must stick to as it is located in a government building.

As for the connecting problem, Li Yun, an engineer in the center says that storms often break the cables and it takes time to wait for new network hubs to be set up by the provider.

Problems



always
sometimes
never

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In Sickness and in Health

By Sun Ming

Just as people were getting used to the idea of China's controversial new marriage registration regulations, a special case in Sichuan Province last week re-ignited the debate.

Last month, Zhou Xiaoyan, (pseudonym), 23, found out she was HIV-positive after taking the still compulsory marriage health check. Had the couple decided to register for marriage after October 1, she wouldn't have known. Zhou thought she was in perfect health and admitted she wouldn't have had the health check if it wasn't compulsory.

"I never intended to cheat my husband," Zhou told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday. "I certainly don't want to spread my disease to him. I was so relieved to hear he hadn't been infected by me."

To the surprise of many people, news of Zhou's condition did not change the feelings of her fiancé, Liang Chenghao (pseudonym), 35. The couple got married last Monday.

A big shock

Zhou, who comes from a village in Quxian County, Sichuan Province, left her hometown after she graduated from a primary school. From then on, she made a living in Shenzhen. "Zhou met Liang in 2001 when she was working as an assembly worker in Shenzhen. Liang, who is from Hong Kong, was also a worker in the same factory," reported *Tianfu Daily*, a local newspaper in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province.

On September 22, after fulfilling some procedures at Sichuan Province Marriage Registration Office in Chengdu, Zhou and Liang went to the Jinjiang District Health Care Center for the pre-marital check-ups.

On September 23, Zhou received a telephone call from the Registration Office and was informed that she had been diagnosed with HIV.

"I told her she should undergo a further medical examination to test whether she had full-blown AIDS," Fei Lihua, a staff member from the office told *Beijing Today*.

According to regulations on HIV carriers and AIDS patients issued by the Ministry of Health in 1998, AIDS patients wishing to marry were urged to show extra caution and those infected with HIV should receive a further medical consultation before getting married.

Fei said that Zhou was startled and cried when she heard of her illness. "She asked me to keep it secret and not tell her boyfriend. I promised," said Fei who still had to report the case to her boss. "It sounded that she still wanted to marry Liang."

But Zhou didn't go to the health care center for a further medical test in the following days.

I do

In the morning of October 9, Zhou and her boyfriend showed up at the Sichuan Province Marriage Registration Office again.

"They walked hand in hand into our office and we recognized them at once," said Fei.

"She had told her boyfriend about her illness," said Fei. "He looked quite calm. When I asked him whether he really wanted to marry Zhou, he thought for a few seconds and then said 'yes'."

Fei and her co-workers didn't know how to deal with the unusual application. "Under the new marriage registration regulations, couples need only show their ID cards and residency papers and sign a document stating they are not already married. Zhou and Liang met all the demands."

Li Liangdeng, deputy director of the Civil Administration Bureau of Sichuan Province, which is in charge of the mar-

It used to be that Chinese people couldn't get married without permission from their work units and without having had a health check prior to the ceremony. From October 1, this requirement has been scrapped, according to the new marriage registry regulation.



The couple's marriage certificate

riage registration office, eventually permitted the application of a marriage license.

"To be frank, I was very hesitant. We've never encountered such an unusual application for marriage before," Li told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday. "But how could we refuse? Liang entirely

understands the illness and still insisted on his decision."

The couple got the marriage certificates last Monday and Liang then flew to Hong Kong to prepare their new apartment.

Tianfu Daily said last Tuesday that many people don't understand the action of the couple,



Just in case? A couple visits the Jinjiang Health Center.

Photos by Mai Duo

and many of them even accuse Zhou of being selfish. "We love each other deeply and we really want to have a family. I hope he will be healthy forever. We'll definitely take measures to avoid spreading my disease to him," Zhou told *Beijing Today*.

New regulation questioned

Liu Jie, director of the law office of Sichuan Province Health Bureau, supports the couple's decision to get married.

"Marriage is a legal right for everybody, whether one side or both sides are infected," Liu told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday. "All our health departments can do is to provide them with medical advice and tell them how to avoid spreading the disease."

However, Li Shuangquan, deputy director of the Standing Committee of Sichuan Province People's Congress, has a completely different opinion.

"Nearly everyone knows that AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease. How can an HIV carrier

register for marriage?" said Li. "That's why I doubt the sense of the new marriage registration regulation. Why should the compulsory pre-marital health check be removed? If Zhou hadn't had a check before marriage, she wouldn't have known about her illness? And she would definitely spread her disease to her husband."

Li conceded the case was unusual but said it was a good example of why the compulsory pre-marital health check should be retained.

The new registration regulation makes the physical check-up a voluntary action. It is widely regarded as a move to simplify the marriage registration process and offer more personal choices. However, some critics have challenged the regulation, saying it conflicts with the Law on Mother and Infant Healthcare which stipulates that couples should undergo physical check-ups before getting married.

"There is no legal problem as long as the two sides have full knowledge of each other's condition and still insist on getting married," says Wu Changzhi, professor at China University of Political Science and Law, a renowned expert in marriage law. "This couple's marriage doesn't threaten the interests of society," he told *Beijing Today*.

When asked whether removing the compulsory pre-marital health check might lead to the spread of sexually transmitted disease, Wu stressed that she encourages new couples to take health checks before marriage. "But the check shouldn't be a mandatory requirement."

Wu pointed out that in the past several decades, the check has become just a formality or money-making procedure in some areas.

Wu hailed the deletion of the compulsory regulation as socially progressive and a significant step forward for human rights.

Babies for Sale

By Dong Nan

On October 15, the trial began for an organized gang who have sold 147 babies in the last two years. The trial, in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, is the biggest yet regarding the "baby trade" in China. Sixty eight suspects are being prosecuted.

The criminal group was discovered earlier this year. In March, Guangxi police cracked two baby trade cases and saved more than 40 babies. Following up their leads, the police discovered an even bigger criminal network which was busily "acquiring", transporting and selling babies throughout Guangxi, Henan, Anhui and Hubei. The business involved more than 100 people.

Captured on the highway

On March 17, suspects including Cui Wenxian, Ge Fashen, Xu Yueling and Zhang Xiaogao divided into three groups and gathered in Yulin, Guangxi Autonomous District. They had gathered 28 babies and hired a coach to take them to Haozhou, Anhui.

On the road, two babies bought by Cui Wenxian kept crying, so Cui fed them sleeping pills. One of them had choked to death by the time police stopped the coach.

The coach was stopped and inspected by Guangxi police on the Guihai Expressway. Stuffed inside several travel bags on the backseat the police found 27 baby girls and one little boy.

In his confession, Cui Wenxian said he had transported babies from Yulin to Haozhou by coach four times in the last two years.

Cui Wenxian's group was merely a link in the chain. Through them, the police soon discovered the rest of the criminal group. There was an arm



Police try to comfort the abandoned children

that specialized in providing babies, one that distributed them and another that sold them.

Three groups

The first group was run by Xie Deming and Xi Lifang and their two families. They took charge of "gathering" babies in Yulin and Qinzhou, Guangxi Autonomous District, through midwives at hospitals or middlemen in villages. The price they paid per child varied from 50 to 400 yuan.

From 2001 till their arrest, Xie Deming's family had bought 64 baby girls. In the second half of 2002, Xin Lifang and her hus-

band Chen Shancai had bought 31 babies.

Some of the babies weren't bought and were simply acquired through cheating. In September 2002, a woman who had just given birth to a baby girl in Fumian Hospital, Yulin was told that her sister wanted to adopt her child. Instead, Xie Deming and Xi Lifang took her and later sold her for 400 yuan.

They then sold the babies for 1,200 yuan each to the second group of traders, including Cui Wenxian, Zhao Hongliang, Ge Fashen and Cailiping. This group

took charge of transporting the babies to other provinces, mainly Anhui and Henan, and then selling them to local baby traders.

During the transportation, they would feed babies sleeping pills and bind their hands and feet with cloth, to stop them from attracting attention by moving or making any noise. They put two or more babies into one travel bag and took the bags as luggage when they took buses or coaches.

This group then sold the babies for 2,200 yuan per head to the third group of traders including Han Qingsong, Zhang

Xinfang and Li Guoju. The third group received babies in Yongcheng, Henan and Haozhou, Anhui, and then sold babies to local people at high prices.

Doctors and nurses involved

Of the 68 suspects, 11 are medical staff, including doctors and nurses. Xie Deming and Xin Lifang bought babies from them and paid them 100 to 200 yuan per baby as a "handling charge".

In early 2001, Xie Deming contacted the director and a nurse of the maternity department in Fumian Hospital, Yulin, and asked them to provide babies. They agreed that whenever there was a woman who did not want to raise her baby, the baby would be given to Xie Deming and the hospital would ask the woman to sign a written pledge guaranteeing that she would never seek to find her baby and keep it secret.

The money Xie paid to the hospital would be distributed to nurses and doctors of the maternity department every month by the director and the nurse.

Selling daughters

According to the Guangxi police, most of the babies are girls, and most of them were given away by their parents willingly instead of being kidnapped.

Yulin is near Guangdong, and is one of the richest districts in Guangxi. Many parents sold their daughters not because of poverty, but because of their desperate longing for sons.

According to Wu Zhulin, leader of the detective group of Guangxi, there is a saying in Yulin: "If you have a boy, you would have every thing; if you have a girl, you would have nothing." Many families do not like to raise daughters. It is this that creates the trade.

(Sources: Xinhua and *China Youth Daily*)

By Ma Ning / Zuo Dawen

Helping Out the Press*Exclusive interview with Mr Telemachos Hytiris, Vice Minister of Press and Mass Media*

During the Olympics, more than 10,000 journalists from across the world will swarm into Athens. Just how good a job the Greeks do of organizing interviews and facilities for them



Telemachos Hytiris

as well as providing things like food and transport will have a direct impact on international society's overall impression of the Athens Olympics. Mr Satilis spoke to *Beijing Youth Daily* about this responsibility.

BYD: *What are your ministry's current responsibilities and what will they be during the Olympics?*

Vice Minister: The daily work of the Press and Mass Media Ministry is to contact journalists, to hold regular briefings, to answer questions concerning the government and to put forward legislation on information. During the Olympics, more than 10,000 journalists will come to Greece. In addition, about 5000 journalists who are not sports journalists will come here to cover other aspects of Greece, such as politics, culture, social life and the overall atmosphere of the Games. The Press and Mass Media Ministry is in charge of managing and helping all these journalists.

BYD: *What kind of help will you offer to journalists?*

Vice Minister: Television relay is the main way of covering the Games. An international broadcasting center is being specially built for the Games, which will cooperate with the national television center of Greece to pro-

*Approaching Athens*

The first in a series of seven special reports on the 2004 Olympics



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Olympics Coming Home

vide the main images to television stations around the world and facilitate television relay. Two special information centers are also being built for the Games. They will be located close to the main stadium, facilitating journalists' work. As for language, volunteers helping journalists are required to know at least three languages.

BYD: *For the last two years, questions have been raised about the construction schedule of Olympic facilities in Athens. What is your opinion on the schedule?*

Vice Minister: We must admit that currently the Athens Olympic facilities construction is running somewhat behind. The main reason lies in the conflicts between conservation of cultural heritage and Olympic construction projects. Greece has very strict laws on protecting cultural relics. Once cultural relics are found in an area where construction is taking place, no matter what kind of project it is, it has to stop and experts in archeology will be dispatched by the Cultural Ministry to investigate the site.

If anyone tries to disguise or hide any finds they stumble on and do not report it, they will be seriously punished. If any cultural relics are found in Olympic project sites, one way forward is to relocate the project. If it cannot be moved, a museum must be built to protect the relics or the construction plan must be changed. It takes time to do all these things. It is very common to dig up cultural relics in the process of construction in Athens and some Olympic projects have been delayed because of this reason.

At present, Greece is quickening its pace in making laws on municipal engineering. Generally speaking, most Olympic construction projects are on schedule, in fact most have already been finished and the city layout is being improved. We believe that the Games will be a great success.

BYD: *Greece does not have a*



Beijing Youth Daily grill Greek Press and Mass Media Vice Minister Telemachos Hytiris.

Photos by Cheng Tieliang

large population. How will you make use of these stadiums built for the games to avoid waste?

Vice Minister: Most of the sports facilities will be preserved after the games to encourage people to use them for exercise. Some facilities will be changed into cultural and entertainment facilities. However, some facilities for sports which are not so popular among Greeks, for instance baseball, will simply have to be demolished after the Games.

BYD: *According to Athens' experience in preparing for the Games, what kind of problems should Beijing pay attention to in its preparations?*

Vice Minister: The most important thing is to do a good job of dealing with relations between the government and the Olympic Organizing Committee. We all hope that Athens' experience can be helpful to Beijing. It's another avenue of exchange between our two ancient civilizations.

Greece and China to Enhance Cooperation around Olympics*Exclusive interview with*

Tang Zhenqi, Chinese ambassador to Greece

Ever since the beginning of preparatory work for the Athens Games, there's been a marked increase in exchanges between Greece and China. The Chinese Embassy to Greece has become far more busy. More than 40 Chinese delegations have recently visited Athens.

BYD: *How will the ancient cultures of Greece and China influence the way they hold the Games?*

Mr Tang: Both events will have a strong cultural flavor. Also, as China is the most populous country in the world, holding the Games there will further the popularization of Olympic spirit. The ideals originally embodied by the Games, such as peace, friendship, health and pursuit of life, are just as important today. Greece is the birthplace of the Olympics. In 2004, the Games will return to



Tang Zhenqi

their "hometown." So for them to move to Beijing next is the best way to inherit and carry forward the Olympic spirit.

BYD: *What about the preparatory work for the 2004 Athens Games? What should Beijing learn from Athens?*

Mr Tang: In order to prepare for the Games, all of Greece has been mobilized, including government organizations, citizens and the Olympic Organizing Committee. Some projects like the new international airport have already been put into use and other related projects are also under construction. Each country has its unique national situation. Greece is actually the smallest country which has ever held the games. It is by no means an easy job for Greece to hold the largest and the most important sports events in the world.

Greece's understanding of the Olympics is what we should learn from. They see the games as a celebration of peace and culture. They also deserve our admiration for trying to play down the role of commerce in the Games.

Also, Greece is not holding the Games separately; the event is being integrated with other cultural exchange activities such as the Athens Arts Festival.

BYD: *How can the Games promote Sino-Greek exchange and cooperation?*

Mr Tang: Chinese enterprises have already started donating telecommunications equipment to the Athens Olympics. Some Chinese staff are receiving training in the Athens Olympic Organizing Committee. Some Chinese people are working for related companies and the general level of Chinese participation in the Games has seen a rapid increase. Meanwhile, Greek companies are hoping to participate in construction projects for the 2008 Games in Beijing. The mayor of Athens is due to visit Beijing in the near future.

BYD: *What about Sino-Greek economic cooperation?*

Mr Tang: Chinese companies are trying to get into the market in Greece. It may not be that big, as the country only has 10 million people, but Greece has great influence on its neighbors in the Balkans, so the importance of Greece can not be underestimated. Secondly, with its long history of shipping, Greece has a very big ship building and maintenance market. Greek ship owners are turning their eyes to China. Greece and China are also looking at some promising cooperative projects in areas such as marble and olive oil trade and tourism.

Six suggestions for Beijing

Beijing Youth Daily visited Athens and interviewed Mr Constantinos Cartalis, secretary general of the Olympic Games under the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, which is officially in charge of the

Games, asking him for suggestions about the Beijing Olympics.

BYD: *Both Athens and Beijing are ancient capitals. What kind of experience has Athens gained in protecting cultural relics?*

Secretary general: In the process of constructing Olympic projects, cultural relics are frequently discovered. With some especially important relics, there is no choice but for a project to give way to them. For example, in the process of building an expressway, an ancient church was discovered. The solution was for the road to change its original route and steer clear of the site. In another case, a relic from the 11th century BC was found on the site where a stadium was going to be built. We had to carefully move the relic to another place.

BYD: *After we came to Athens, we found that you had done a lot of work in improving roads and stadiums. Are your preparations on the sporting side as advanced? How many medals do you think Greece will win?*

Secretary general: We have done some statistical work. At the Sydney Games, we won 30 medals, although compared with China this is a small number. Greece is a small country and we were satisfied with the result. As for next year's medals, Greece has strengths in some events like track and field, weight lifting, and basketball.

BYD: *Given your preparations for the 2004 Games, what kind of suggestions would you offer to Beijing?*

Secretary general: I think the responsibilities of different departments should be clearly defined from the very beginning. Second, if there is a problem, it should be solved as quickly as possible. Third, do not make excessively magnificent plans, you should be practical. Everyone wants to gain a good reputation from the Games, but gradually you will find that you cannot do what you want because time is limited. Fourth, decisions must be made in a short time so it would be better if there is only one decision maker. Fifth, pay attention to accommodation, especially for members of the Olympic family, such as players, coaches and officials. Sixth, sponsors should be introduced from the beginning of project construction, as this can help alleviate the economic burden.



Constantinos Cartalis

Into Africa

By Zhang Huan

Africa has always stimulated the imagination of adventurous travelers, with its vivid wildlife, stunning landscape, ancient civilizations and exotic atmosphere. But most tourists avoid getting too close to the day-to-day reality for much of the continent where people are struggling with poverty, disease and civil unrest. Photographer Liang Zi wanted to venture into the remotest areas and to live with local people for several months, to try and experience real life in Africa. She wanted to record the contrasts between the modern and the old civilizations and the lives of people left behind by the developed world.

In the house of the chief

Liang knew safety would be a factor, especially in remote areas, so she decided a bit of *guanxi* was needed. She tried to find anyone who could put her in contact with the chief of a tribe or head of a village. After a year of inquiry and waiting, a friend of Liang's introduced her to a Chinese businessman who worked in Africa and happened to know the chief of a tribe in Lesotho, southern Africa. Liang got in touch with the chief right away and managed to organize her first trip to Africa.

Arriving in Lesotho in July, 2000, she reported to the Chinese Embassy who were pretty surprised about her plans. The ambassador said he had never heard of the small village she was heading for, named Tabamu, and it turned out to be in one of the poorest and most remote areas of the country. Staff at the embassy warned Liang that even in Maseru, the capital city, theft was a common problem and that most Chinese who had lived there for over a year had been robbed. "You cannot speak their language and it is such a remote tribe. Do you think you can make it?" the ambassador asked Liang. "I don't know if I can or not," she answered honestly.

The chief was 56 years old, stout and a man of few words. Liang got into his car and they set out to the chief's village in the mountains. By nightfall, after a day's journey, the car pulled up. Getting out of the car, Liang found herself surrounded by darkness, seeing no moon or lamplight. The chief just walked away and disappeared. Liang became scared and didn't know what to do. Suddenly, a big hand took her arm from behind and pulled her backwards. She screamed out. The hand immediately released her. Then she realized that the person was trying to show her the way.

Liang was led to a small building made of stone. She pushed the door open and a smell of something rotting came from inside. There was only a bed and several broken boxes in the small room and the wooden door could easily be pushed open. Liang was worried that living in such a house would be unsafe, so she decided to inveigle her way into the house of the chief. She went to him and said in English, "I was born in a rich family and have never stayed in a village or experienced such hardship. I am frightened to live in such a cold and horrifying house. And I must write. It is so dark in the house that I cannot see anything clearly." The chief didn't answer. By way of striking a bargain Liang then took out a military flashlight and gave it to him, saying "It is too dark outside. With the flashlight, it is more convenient and safe for you." Suitably impressed by the flashlight, the chief allowed Liang to stay with him.

Generous to a fault

Liang stayed in Tabamu from July to November. She filled two diaries and used up over



Photographing a traditional local dance

"Many things in life you can only dream about, because so much is beyond your control, but at least you can decide where to go."

—Liang Zi



Surrounded by her new family

Photos provided by Liang Zi



White powder on the face - the mark of maturity

Photo by Liang Zi

200 rolls of film. Just to be careful, she did not go out in the morning until the sun rose and before nightfall she would finish her photographing and go back to the house of the chief. The local inhabitants regarded the chief with reverence. "Going into his house was like going into a big safe," she says.

Liang carefully hid her cash and traveler's checks in different places and carried a tripod which could be used as a weapon if she needed it. Her main concern was avoiding disease and accidents. As AIDS was common in the area, she was nervous about taking any blood transfusions.

Medicine was not easy to find in Tabamu, so Liang gave people some of the medicine she brought from China, an act which boosted her popularity considerably. Once the chief caught a cold and suffered from a severe headache, Liang gave him two Yingqiao pills, a traditional Chinese medicine, and it soon did the trick. Soon, however, Liang had run out of medicine.

When Liang got a fever the only remedy was to lie in bed for three days. Usually in the daytime, she went out with the housekeeper to take photos and never stayed at home so the housekeeper knew that she was

ill and asked her anxiously, "where is the medicine?" Answering that she'd given it all away, Liang said the housekeeper's eyes became wet with tears. "They seldom cry even when they lose a family member so I knew the housekeeper really cared about me," Liang says.

Liang often carried some sweets in her pockets to give the children, but this kind habit also caused her some problems. She once went to a village to interview the people and met with more than 10 children at the entrance of the village. The children asked her for sweets, but Liang did not have enough for them. The children then stopped Liang from going into the village and when she was about to leave for another village, they started throwing stones at her.

Liang decided to improvise. She ran into a nearby house and asked the father about his children. It turned out they were among the ones who had just attacked her. Liang suggested to the father taking photos for his family, so he happily called his children over to the house. Liang gave the remaining four sweets in her pockets to the children and went on to call the other children in to take photos. They then forgot about

the sweets, and pushed each other towards the camera. After taking photos, the children left with smiles on their faces.

The second trip

In November, 2001, Liang went to Africa a second time and lived there till April, 2002. This time, she stayed in the city of Bo in Sierra Leone and lived with a family. There were only women in the household as the mother, Aimi, had separated with her husband. The first night after Liang moved in, Aimi urged Liang to latch the window before going to sleep. But the temperature was nearly 40 Centigrade, even at night, and Liang couldn't resist leaving the window open to get some air. Later, she awoke to a strange sensation, as though the bed was moving under her. She opened her eyes and found that in the darkness, a man was leaning in through the window and pulling at her sheet. Liang screamed and the thief slipped away.

Liang said to herself, "he didn't succeed. He must be reluctant to go away. I'll let him know what Chinese women are made of." So she left the window open, picked up an insecticide spray and lay in wait. Soon, she heard somebody walking on tiptoe outside and then a pair of eyes appeared at the window. Liang hit the spray button and gave him a full dose in the eyes. The thief cried out and fell down. Liang then climbed on the windowsill and shouted, "If you come back again, I'll kill you!" Still, Liang did not dare leave the window open after that.

During Liang's stay in Sierra Leone, the country was entering a period of peace after ten years of civil war. On January 20, 2002, the President came to the city of Bo to address a rally. Liang got up early in the morning and carried all her photographic equipment to the meeting place. At the end of the speech, the President expressed gratitude to the governments of the UK, US, Nigeria and China for their help and support in the past years. When the President mentioned China, Liang noticed many foreign journalists were looking at her and she realized she was the only Chinese and the only female photographer there. At that moment, in the square, in the eyes of thousands of people, she was China's representative. Liang felt so proud.

During her second trip, Liang shot 40 videotapes, 120 rolls of film and more than 1000 digital pictures and finished a diary intended to form the basis of television programs about her experiences. She also felt herself becoming more "African" with tougher, weathered skin and used to the feeling of mud between her toes. Liang felt she had really become a member of the local people.

Now, Liang has already begun her third trip. Her destination: Eritrea in eastern Africa.



Life in the jungle

Photo by Liang Zi

New Excavations Made at Erlitou

By Zhang Huan

Two large-scale ancient palace foundations have been excavated recently in Yanshi, Henan Province, home of the ancient Erlitou Culture.

According to written records, Erlitou was located in the capital area of the Xia Dynasty (circa 21st to 16th century BC), China's first recorded dynasty. Archeological findings have shown that Erlitou Culture dates back

3,850 to 3,550 years, the transitional period between the Xia and Shang (circa 17th century to 711 BC) dynasties.

The relic site of Erlitou is of great historical significance to archeologists in understanding the Xia culture and identifying the precise time the Xia Dynasty was replaced by the Shang.

The two newly-excavated foundation sites in Erlitou are known as the Third Palace and

Sixth Palace. The Third Palace stands underneath the Second Palace, a previously-discovered relic site. According to Xu Hong, director of the archeological team, the Third Palace was the earliest palace to be built on a "rammed earth" foundation in the Erlitou Culture.

It measures at least 150 meters from north to south, and consists of at least three courtyards. Compared with the

Second Palace, which had previously been regarded as the earliest large-scale palace foundations discovered in China, it is earlier, larger in scale and more complex in structure.

The Sixth Palace was found beside the site of the Second Palace. Since it was built during the late years of the Erlitou Culture, determining the exact year in which it was built will shed light on a question

that has long been hotly debated in Chinese archeological circles, namely, when did the Xia Dynasty actually end?

"This site is of considerable interest to many archeologists because knowledge of when the construction started will lead to a better understanding of the exact time of the transition between the Xia and Shang dynasties," commented Xu, "Further excavation is expected to help

to determine whether the palace was built during the Xia or the Shang Dynasty and when the Xia Dynasty ended."

According to Xu, however, despite the new discoveries brought by the excavation of the two foundation sites, the key riddle in understanding the Erlitou Culture and the cultures of the Xia and Shang Dynasties – the written language used at the time – remains unsolved.

By Guo Yuandan

On October 11, 159 antique printing plates of traditional New Year's pictures were found hidden in the roof of an old house in Wuqiang County, Hebei Province. The plates date back to the Qing Dynasty, and some were made as far back as the reign of Emperor Tongzhi (1861-1875).

These engraved plates were discovered by Jia Zhenbang. The Jia family was one of the biggest producers of New Year's pictures in Wuqiang County during the Qing Dynasty. The family had practiced the traditional craft for six generations, but after the end of the Qing Dynasty, the business went into decline.

Jia Zhenbang's grandfather gave around 520 engraving plates, representing the family's entire heritage, to his two sons. In 1963, Jia Zhenbang's father wrapped his 200 plates in reed matting, which he placed inside the roof of the house, primarily to protect them from floods. It was this fortuitous move that saved the plates from destruction during the Cultural Revolution. The plates kept by the other brother were all destroyed.

Jia Zhenbang's father did not tell his son of the family heritage hidden in the roof. He only told Jia that he must protect the house



Antique printing plates found in the roof of Jia's home.

New Year's Picture Plates Unearthed

very well. After many years, the house became too old to live in and Jia used it as a warehouse.

Earlier this month Jia found some engraved plates in the roof by chance. He recalled he once heard that the family's New Year's picture plates were still well protected, and he decided to contribute them to the country.

The engraved plates are invaluable in terms of studying the history and culture of New Year's pictures.

New Year's pictures, which first appeared in the Song Dynasty, were typically pasted on walls and doors at Spring Festival time as a decoration and to bring good luck in the coming year.

The painting draft was first engraved on wood and then printed, or the outline of painting was engraved and printed and then the blanks were filled in with ink. It was the only method of producing pictures on a large scale before the invention of the printing press.

The development of New Year's pictures reached a peak in the Qing Dynasty, and Wuqiang County, Hebei Province, is one of the five places famed for their production. The four others are Yangliuqing in Tianjin, Taohuawu in Jiangsu, Weifang in Shandong and Mianzhu in Sichuan.



A Wuqiang New Year's picture

Photos by Guo Tieliu

Former Home of an Ancient Tibetan Man of Letters

The former residence of the inventor of the Tibetan alphabet has been found in a village in Tibet.

A farmer named Baima Samzhub, in Tunba village, Nyemo County, was surprised to find frescos on the wall of his room when removing white lime coating to redecorate last week.

The township government placed a protection order on the house after receiving a report about the discovery.

After initial research in the village, which is 140 kilometers from Lhasa, historians and archaeologists came to the conclusion that the house was the former residence of Tunmi Sangbozha, the inventor of Tibetan alphabet, who lived about 1,300 years ago.

The house was once used as a granary and the courtyard it belonged to was once shared by three farming households.

The picturesque Tunba village maintains the traditional Tibetan ways of incense making and engraving, which are also believed to have been invented by Tunmi Sangbozha.

The local government has announced plans to open the village as a tourist destination.

(Xinhua)

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UK designers

By Yu Shanshan

In the running for the title of "Nation of Creativity," the US or Japan are likely to be first in the minds of many people. Through the Great Expectations show held at the International Boulevard in Oriental Plaza from October 9 to 19, the UK made a case for its claim to that honor, showcasing around 100 contemporary products of British design in such diverse fields as architecture, advertising, medical and consumer products, vehicles, film, new media, fashion and textiles.

Feast of design

To give the event a distinct feel and rhythm, Great Expectations was designed like a huge feast, with 15

it easier to fish out socks hidden in the bottom.

"You can see that unlike some countries that are only good at design in certain areas, the UK has a wide range of creativity," said Garfield Myrie, media officer of the British Design Council.

The lines of eager visitors waiting every day for guided tours of the exhibition were evidence that the UK had succeeded in its goal of convincing more Chinese of its creative abilities. "These items, to me, show that good design can bring about better quality of life," Li Xiaolei, a student of industrial design at Beijing Union University told *Beijing Today* last Saturday afternoon.

Inspiring examples

While wowing the Beijing masses, the items on display in Great Expectations also set impressive examples for domestic designers. In fact, some prominent participants in the event made connections between the heritages of the UK and China to demonstrate that nations with rich histories can still be innovative. "The UK is not just a nation of gents, Big Ben and Shakespeare, we also have Beckham, many cutting-edge buildings and *Shakespeare in Love*," John Sorrel, co-chair of the Britain Abroad Task Force, noted in his speech "Creative Nations" delivered on October 10 at the Sino-UK Industrial Design Development Forum in the Landmark Towers.

Design is of rising importance in the increasingly competitive global economy. As British design consultant Rodney Fitch noted, "Only one company can be the cheapest. All the others must use design."

However, few Chinese companies seem to have realized the difference good design can make. Johnson Lee, design service director of Lenovo's Industrial Design Center, confessed that although leading domestic enterprises like his company talk big about design, it is common practice to spend three months in negotiating contracts but giving only one month to product design.

According to a statement made at the development forum by Liu Guanzhong, a professor at Tsinghua University's Art and Design Academy, Chinese designers have two bad habits - blindly drawing from Western designs that may or may not be acceptable to Chinese consumers, and emphasizing luxury items targeted at only very elite customers.

Liu said, "If we start from carefully looking at our own lives and our own needs, good designs will naturally be created." Li Xiaolei completely agrees. "There are so many ordinary items and places around us that call for some redesigning," she said while looking at a computer display. "The first things I want to change are the water faucets in my dormitory."

innovative items set along a huge, long table. Installed on the table between the items were computer screens offering visitors interactive looks at other feats of British design. Those displays were brought to life by the clever chairs around the table that held hidden speakers, allowing guests to actually hear testimony from the designers themselves on their inspirations, ideas and execution.

"The stories they hear will show not only that Britain is home to a spirit of invention, but also how the UK excels in turning creative ideas into commercial successes," said Keith Davies, British Council Deputy Director, at a press conference held shortly before the show opened.

Among the most impressive displays were those for Mill Film's post-production work on the Oscar-winning 2001 film *Gladiator* and BBC Worldwide's production *Walking With Dinosaurs*, both of which were shown on two large screens, as well as a Ford-Cosworth XF V-8 engine, men's wear designed by Richard James and a Biomega bike by Marc Newson Ltd.

All the designs on show were impressive combinations of form and function. GB SOLO Limited's SOLOtic helmet for firefighters integrates breathing and communication equipment with a thermal imaging camera in one unit that can be put on in a mere 15 seconds. Regent Medical SSL International's Biogel Reveal double-layered medical glove releases a bright green liquid when punctured to reduce risk of disease transmission during surgical procedures. Even the ordinary laundry basket got an update thanks to El Ultimo Grito, creators of a spring-loaded model that makes

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Two Orphans

By Dong Nan

The winding up of the Beijing National Drama Festival earlier this month has not closed the curtain on the National Theatre's popular production of *Zhaoshi Guer* (Zhao, The Orphan).

On October 19, the drama started a two week season at the Beijing Children's Theater, following its debut at the drama festival.

Directed by Tian Qinxin, the drama is adapted from a 600-year-old opera of the same name. It tells a story of revenge and palace revolution over two generations during the Warring States Period, more than 2,000 years ago.

Inevitably, Tian's production has been the subject of incessant comparisons with the version by Lin Zhaochua of the People's Art Theatre, which



Photo by Li Yan

The three centercharacters in Tian's production, played by Ni Dahong(left), Zhai Xiaoxiong and Han Tongsheng

premiered this April and was staged again for the drama festival (reviewed in Beijing Today on April 25).

Unlike Lin's extravagant design, which featured a stage made from over 50,000

ancient style bricks, live horses and an ox, Tian's stage is simple and clear, relying largely on lighting to convey the tragic atmosphere.

"Of course, each has its

strong points, but I think Tian's version is simple and strong," Liu Tong, a drama buff who saw both productions, told *Beijing Today*, "and I especially liked the way Tian's version ended."

The Bone and the Soul

By Dong Nan

For the first time Canadian and Chinese dancers are to perform together on Beijing's stage. On October 17 and 18, Canada's Snell Thouin Project and the Beijing Modern Dance Troupe staged the multimedia dance *Bone* at the Beijing Ethnic Culture Palace Theater.

The dance explores how human beings conquer their fear and ignorance, to achieve harmony with the nature in the course of seeking love. The performance combines alternative rock, traditional Chinese music, film sequences and lighting effects to create a psychedelic atmosphere.

According to choreographer Nadine Thouin, the dance is inspired by the relationship of people and nature in Zen Buddhism, and the cooperation with Chinese dancers shows the spirit of western and eastern culture.

Since 2001, the Snell Touin Project has worked with Asian dancers from Malaysia and Mongolia.

After the Beijing performance and shows in Shanghai and Guangzhou, the dance will tour Canada next year.



Photo by Zhang Heping

Rock Review



Simple Folk Sound

By Jiang Xiujing

Wan Xiaoli's charm lies in his guitar playing and his hoarse voice. His songs combine folk music and modern social phenomena, which deeply reveal the reality of the daily hustle and bustle, and juxtapose the dullness but necessities of life.

While more and more musicians turn to complex electronics, Wan persists with his simple, guitar-driven tunes and plain lyrics, singing about what is going on in the city in which we live.

His most popular piece is *Huli* (The Fox), containing lines like: "I finally realized that there are no fairy tales in the forest, and the rabbit is much more cunning. The world had changed, and I had to run away". By way of allegory, he tells stories about ordinary people's feelings.

Line up:

Vocals/guitar: Wan Xiaoli Accordion: Zhang Weiwei Percussion: Guo Long

Come on and off (2002) Recommendations: *Huli* (The Fox), *Muqin* (Mother), *Xia*, *Weidade* (The Great)

Electronic Arts Festival

By Dong Nan

From November 1 to 4, the first Beijing Electronic Arts Festival will be held at the Loft. This is the first international large scale electronic music performance in China and one of the largest avant-garde electronic music shows ever held in Asia.

The festival involves some 20 artists from six countries. Most of them represent the highest level in their respective areas.

The artists includes French musician Laetitia Sonami, who has invented and adopted advanced technology in computer music; Zbigniew Karkowski, a Polish musician renowned in the underground "noise" scene; Austria midi musician Helmut Schafer and veteran of sonic arts Randy Yau.

Many artists active in the Chinese electronic music scene are participating as well, including 8GG, Wang Fan and Sun Dawei.

"The development of electronic and computer music is rapid, but Chinese people and artists do not have many chances to witness them. The festival will help domestic artists communicate with the outside world," stated renowned Chinese American electronic musician and the organizer of the festival, Zhu Dajun, in a press release.

WORLDWIDE



Madonna

Madonna in a "Remix" Mood

Just in time for the holiday shopping season, Madonna will on November 25 release *Remixed and Revisited*.

The seven-song CD includes remixes of tracks from this year's *American Life* album as well as the previously unreleased song *Your Honesty*.

Your Honesty was recorded during the 1994 *Bedtime Stories* recording sessions, and was co-written and co-produced with Dallas Austin. The CD also features the Jason Nevins radio mix of Madonna's forthcoming single, *Nothing Fails*.

(Reuters)



Liza Minnelli and David Gest

Husband Alleges Minnelli Hit Him in Drunken Rages

Liza Minnelli's estranged husband David Gest sued the entertainer on Tuesday for \$10 million in damages for spousal abuse, saying she attacked him in drunken rages, leaving him with an "unrelenting pain in his head."

An 11-page civil suit filed in Manhattan Supreme Court by Gest, who married Minnelli in March 2002, says she threw a lamp at him and when he tried to calm her down and she beat him in the face with her fists.

Gest, who separated from Minnelli three months ago, alleged that her heavy drinking gave the singer-actress "remarkable force and strength."

(Reuters)

Record 55 Foreign Films Seek Oscar Nod

A record-breaking 55 countries - one more than last year - have submitted films for consid-

eration in the Academy Awards' foreign language film category.

The five shortlisted nominees will be announced, along with contenders in the other categories, January 27.

(Reuters)



Christopher Boe (left) with director Wim Wenders

Buddy Miles Sues Hendrix Estate, L A Labels

Drummer Buddy Miles is suing the estate of Jimi Hendrix and several record labels for millions of dollars, alleging he was not paid royalties for his collaborations with the guitarist more than 30 years ago.

The drummer in Hendrix's short-lived Band of Gypsies, Miles, 56, said in the suit filed on Monday in Los Angeles Superior Court, that he received virtually no money for his work.

The band was formed in 1969 and Miles left a year later. He said his collaborations with Hendrix produced 38 songs that he either performed on or co-wrote, including *Voodoo Child*, *Rainy Day Dream Away*, and *Machine Gun*.

(Reuters)

Elton Books 3 Years in Vegas

Elton John has signed on for a three-year, 75-show run at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. John's engagement kicks off February 13 in the theater, built to accommodate a lavish Celine Dion production that will call the venue home for at least three years.

John's performances will not alter the show schedule for Dion's *A New Day...* During breaks in that show's run, the Colosseum has already hosted performances by Gloria Estefan, Jerry Seinfeld, Mariah Carey and Tim McGraw.

(Reuters)



Elton John

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Photo by Elva Li

Bombproof Bottles

By Elva Li

A small store in the China World Shopping Center is out to prove that not all bottles are made the same. On offer is a range of "drinking systems" under the flag of Switzerland's SIGG brand.

Most of these high-tech vessels are made from single pieces of brushed aluminum, giving them uniform and seamless

sides, extreme durability and the ability to safely contain and keep fresh anything from simple water to carbonated beverages, milk or wine.

Containers of this caliber are best suited for the active life, where liquids are likely to be jostled, shaken, tossed or worse. And while simple models in battleship gray or black may appear to minimalist athletes,

more expressive people will get a kick out of the bombproof bottles covered in bright, even fluorescent, colors, or images from popular movies.

The bottles come with a range of accessories that heighten their functions. The sports top is ideal for drinkers on the go, while the screw top renders the containers serious enough to hold fuel. Other gear like bike holders, insulating pouches, jogging belt carriers and carrying straps make sure bottles can be at the ready in any situation.

Prices range from 140 yuan to 300 yuan per bottle, obviously not in the bargain range, but reasonable enough considering overall container quality.

These serious bottles, included in the collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art, are solid buys for athletes, design buffs or anyone interested in giving their beverages the best in protection.

Where: No. SB123B, China World Shopping Mall, Chaoyang. **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6505 7890



Naturally-dyed comb, 38 yuan

Combs Made the Old Fashioned Way

By Yu Shanshan

People who are particular about their hair should be equally careful about their combs. Any one who insists on the best for their head should check out the exquisite combs for sale at the local headquarters of Chongqing-based Tanmujiang Company near Qianmen or the brand's three other local stores.

According to Liu Li, manager of the Qianmen store, there are all kinds of combs suited for the many different kinds of hair out there. Combs made of boxwood (11 to 30 yuan) or peachwood (7 to 21 yuan) with plenty of space between their teeth are perfect for permed or naturally curly hair, while horn combs, carved either from black buffalo horn (22 to 38 yuan) or white ox horn (22 to 98 yuan), can help people prevent or counter hair loss.

To add to the lives of its products, Tanmujiang has invented combs made in two parts and others with insertable teeth, all of which benefit from careful shaping from horizontally-grained wood to make parts remarkably durable. One series of combs made from wood from golden wingceltis trees (18 to 35 yuan each) have teeth inserted into small holes on the handle, so that any that break can be easily replaced.

Wooden combs were the norm in China for literal millennia, but in the past several decades they

have been all but squeezed out of the market by cheaper and easier-to-make plastic models. Tanmujiang is leading the natural comb comeback, in part by offering versions brightly colored by natural dyes (28 or 38 yuan each).



The excellent price-to-quality ratio of these combs make them perfect small gifts, although fancier models, such as brushes with handles and bristles of wingceltis wood that go for 267 yuan a piece, are available. More popular items include combs with handles carved with pictures of animals from the Chinese zodiac (58 yuan each) or figures from Chinese lore (30 to 68 yuan).

Where: No. 52 Qianmen Lu, Chongwen **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6701 2136

No. 375 Donsibei Lu, Dongcheng **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6403 2552

No. 84 Xijiekou Beilu, Xicheng **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6613 7632

No. 88 Wangfujing Lu, Dongcheng **Open:** 8:30 am - 10:30 pm **Tel:** 8511 2805

Delicate Decorations

Honghong Huohuo, 1,200 yuan
Photos by Chen Yuan

By Chen Si

Despite the name of the Fire Phoenix shop, most of the home decorations inside should go nowhere near flame, as they are made of special dried leaves.

The leaves are imported from Europe and carefully dried until only the veins are left, giving them a beautiful, ethereal look and delicate feel. They also come dyed in a range of colors and then made into attractive pieces sure to suit any decor, though prices tend to be high in keeping with their rare quality.

The leaves are arranged to form a variety of goods, such as replica dried flowers or other flowers that can magically bloom. Simply pouring water over these 30-yuan items is enough to cause them to moisten and expand.

The store also stocks slightly heartier fake flowers delicately carved from very thin



Buddha head lamp, 400 yuan

wood. These items are challenging to produce, justifying their prices of 30 yuan each or 1,000 for an arrangement in a vase.

The porcelain vases on offer are made in Hainan Province and come decorated with a range of designs, from simple lines to human faces. A standout is the large painted "honghong huohuo" vase (1,200 yuan) filled with bright red mock flowers on spiny branches. Other items sure to add style to any room are Fire Phoenix's line of unusual, stone-made lamps that are replicas of Chinese cultural relics, such as statues of the Buddha, horses or ancient dancers.

Where: Lanjinglija Furnishing Plaza, Haidian **Open:** 9 am - 5:30 pm **Tel:** 13511011794

Red Eagle Has Landed

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Hong Ying has quietly established itself as a premier domestic clothing brand with the goods to compete with major international labels. One of the company's strengths is an insistence that all products be made with high-quality natural materials, such as prime leather, flax and cotton.

Bags were the only things the company made when manager Liu Hongying launched the label in 1996 and remain among the best products in Hong Ying's lines. The classic Hong Ying bag is a racket



Racket bag, 138 yuan



Handbag, 198 yuan

bag, perfectly shaped for hitting the tennis court, originally designed three years ago but still very fashionable.

A new bag on the racks this year is a camera bag that matches an attractive appearance with careful design capable of safely storing everything an avid shutterbug might need. In general, the bags come in blue, dark red or other subdued colors, partly a result of being

made from natural materials such as rough sailcloth.

The brand's clothes have a simple, modern style suitable for all kinds of women in all kinds of situation, formal or casual. Moreover, being made from natural materials, such as pure cotton, ensures they are comfortable and durable.

Where: No. 4 Anhuili, Opposite Yanhuang Art Museum, Yayuncun, Chaoyang **Tel:** 6493 5445

No. 191 Haidian Lu, south of east gate of Renmin University, Haidian **Tel:** 6256 1148

No. 2 Chengfu Lu, Huaqing Jiyuan, Wudaokou, Haidian **Tel:** 8286 5621

No. 48 West Third Ring Road, west of Shuang'an shopping mall, Haidian **Tel:** 62161586

Open: 9:30 am - 9:30 pm (all stores) **Photos by Tian Xiaotong**

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Yangrou huimian,
8 yuan

Tastes of Henan at Yuanxiangyuan Restaurant

By Shan Jinliang

As winter approaches, many Chinese, especially those of Henan Province, turn to warming and nutritious stick-the-ribs-fare like the Henan specialty *yangrou huimian*, or mutton-cooked noodles.

While there are many small specialists in these noodles around town, the best place to get authentic *yangrou huimian* is the Yuxiangyuan Restaurant in Henan Plaza, home of the province's local representative office. That eatery also offers a range of other Henan delicacies, such as *hutu miantiao* (porridge noodles, 8 yuan for a big bowl), *guantang baozi* (soup-filled *baozi*) and *gaolu shaobing* (high-stove baked cake, 5 yuan for one with meat).



Guantang baozi (18 yuan for basket of 10)

Yangrou huimian may sound simple, but actually should include a whole range of ingredients, such as green seaweed, yellow *huanghuacai* (unopened lily buds) and white bean curd skin for an intriguing presentation. The noodles derive their rich, fragrant flavor from a mixture of fennel and other spices with mutton oil that is piquant and warming.

Another Henan specialty worth trying is *hutu miantiao*, a mixture of yellow corn porridge and noodles with strips of carrot, celery and shallot and crushed peanuts, a pretty and tasty concoction.

Originally invented in Kaifeng, the former capital of a few ancient Chinese dynasties, *guantang baozi* (18 yuan for a basket of ten) may look ordinary, but are in fact one of that city's two major culinary treasures. The fillings of these dumplings contain unusually large amounts of water, which converts into heady soup when the *baozi* are steamed. When digging into a *guantang baozi*, diners should first take a small, careful bite, being sure not to spill the tasty contents, and then suck out the meaty soup inside. A fine accompaniment sure to fill the stomach is a couple of *gaolu shaobing* stuffed with mutton or donkey meat.

Where: 28 Huaweili, Panjiayuan, Chaoyang **When:** 7 - 9:30 am, 11:30 am - 2:30 pm, 5:30-9:30 pm **Tel:** 6775 1188 **Average cost:** 60 yuan per person

Serious Shanxi Starch at Jinyang Restaurant

By Dong Nan

The historic Jinyang Restaurant, one of Beijing's few large specialists in Shanxi cuisine, cooks up such tasty food that it inspired famed modern Chinese writer Lao She to pen a poem - "The cat's ears and fish are worthy and splendid."

That minor work refers to two of the restaurant's specialties, assorted cats' ears (*shijin maoerduo*, 30 yuan) and assorted braised fish (*shijin chaoboyu*, 20 yuan). Both dishes are actually made of boiled flour

Carbo Loading, Chinese Style

dumplings pinched into the shapes of cat's ears or fish and then fried with vegetables and eggs with delicious and attractive results.

Knife-cut noodles (*daoxiaomian*, 12 yuan) is another well-known food of Shanxi Province. Unlike the long, pulled noodles made in many other parts of China, the thick, short noodles are cut from a large ball with a knife, and often cooked with a seafood stew.

Yet another way to go on a Shanxi-style carbohydrate binge is to try the Chinese rolls (*youmian juan*, 40 yuan) made with oats flour and eaten with thick broths of mutton or rice. Though delicious and nutritious, these little noodle tubes can be hard to digest, so they should be eaten with restraint.



Knife-cut noodles (daoxiaomian, 12 yuan)

Wenxi cake (*Wenxi bing*, 2 yuan for 50 gram) is a traditional pastry from the town of Wenxi in central Shanxi that has been refined through the years by Jinyang's chefs. The treats are made by pulling dough into extremely long and thin strips that are then tightly rolled and baked into small cakes often stuffed with shallots and salt.



Assorted cats' ears (shijin maoerduo, 30 yuan)

Where: No.241 Zhushikou Xidajie, Xuanwu **Tel:** 6303 1669, 6303 7636 **Where:** No. 35 Baiguanglu Dajie Xuanwu **Tel:** 6354 1107, 6352 7114 **When:** 10:30 am - 2 pm, 5 - 9 pm

Mo' Paomo at Xi'an Restaurant

By Dong Nan

Not surprisingly, the Xi'an

Restaurant is considered by many to be the Beijing's top purveyor of the ancient capital's famed dish *paomo*, a lamb stew made with chunks of broken bread.



One bowl of yangrou paomo is enough to fill an empty stomach.

According to the restaurant's introduction, *paomo* has been made in Shaanxi Province for over 1,000 years. The key to the dish is the quality of the buns and the beef or lamb broth, which should be thick but not greasy. When *paomo* is completely cooked, the chunks of bread should be soft, but with a nice chew to them, and filled with the flavor of the rich broth.

Following Xi'an custom, waiters bring diners two buns each that they then break into little pieces on their own. When ready, waiters take the bread chunks back to the kitchen and quickly return with full bowls of *paomo*.

This restaurant offers another two methods of eating *paomo*. With the *danzou* method, the bun and soup are served as normal, but the beef or mutton inside can be stuffed into other buns to make little sandwiches. *Ganpao paomo* is different in that it is cooked until the small bread pieces have fully absorbed a whole bowl-full of broth.

No matter how it is ordered, *paomo* is delicious and easy on the wallet, with a filling bowl going for only 12. 5 yuan.

Two years after the Xi'an restaurant opened in 1954, Chairman Mao and Zhou Enlai paid a visit to try out the widely hailed *paomo* for themselves and their photograph is still proudly displayed in the center of the establishment.

Besides *paomo*, the menu also includes many other Shaanxi dishes, most of which are based on or include beef or mutton and priced around 30 yuan each.

Where: No.20 Xijiekou Nandajie, Xicheng **When:** 10:30 am - 10:30 pm **Tel:** 6618 1476

Starting this week, the Kitchen Confessionals column will be a regular fixture on Beijing Today's food page. In this column, our reporters will talk with prominent local chefs about their personal stories and experiences, different aspects of Chinese and foreign cuisines and how to replicate restaurant dishes at home.

By Xiao Rong

Cow and sheep stomach may not look or sound too appetizing to many people, but is the main ingredient in a long-cherished Beijing specialty, *baodu*. Despite its relatively simple ingredients and cooking methods, making top-quality *baodu*, or quick-boiled tripe, is widely considered a real art in the capital's culinary circles. Feng Guoming, the third generation of "*baodu shifu*" in his family, has mastered the skills of cooking authentic *baodu*, which he proudly serves at his Jinshenglong Baodu Restaurant at the northwest corner of Jiande Qiao in Haidian District.

Last Saturday, he happily gave *Beijing Today* an introduction to his art and to appreciating *baodu* from the comfort of his restaurant, which he claimed was *the* place to go for truly traditional *baodu* in the capital.



Yang muogutou, 20 yuan

"Our menu is deliberately arranged to distinguish the thirteen kinds of *baodu*, each of which is made from different parts of a cow or sheep stomach, according to their degree of tenderness," he said.

Of those 13 kinds of *baodu*, four are made from cow stomach, called *niubaodu*, and the rest made of sheep stomach, or *yangbaodu*. That group is then broken again into the *yangsiyang*, the four toughest kinds of *yangbaodu*, namely *duban*, *shixin*, *muogu* and *hulu*, while the tenderest part of the sheep stomach is called *duren*.

Feng also takes pride in the careful speed with which *baodu* is served in his restaurant. "A cultured restaurant will not serve one table of diners all the *baodu* they order at one time. Instead, it should be served in keeping with how fast the diners are eating," he explained.

Typically, the waitstaff at Jinshenglong wait until diners have eaten half of one dish of *baodu* before serving the next to make sure the flavors of each course are fresh and distinct. Chewier types of *baodu* are always served before their more tender brethren, perhaps not to excessively tire customers' jaws.



Yang sandan, 20 yuan

At the same time, chewiness is key to the *baodu* experience and part of the "art" of eating *baodu*, as Feng described it. His advice that people loudly use their molars to chew *baodu* before swallowing the stomach morsels, makes it clear that the traditional way of eating is nothing that Miss Manners would approve of. He continued, "When chewing, making a really loud sound like gnawing on a piece of cucumber is the sign of a true *baodu* connoisseur."

He added, "Flavoring is extremely important when eating *baodu*. Diners should first mix their flavoring sauce until it is very even and then

Kitchen Confessionals

Feng Guoming Is No Trifler with Tripe



pick up one piece of *baodu* at a time and dunk it."

The Jinshenglong Restaurant takes its seasoning so seriously that it has received a national patent for its sauce concoction, although that recipe is a carefully guarded secret.

"The biggest characteristic of our sauce is that we don't use the same kind of flavoring for *baodu* as is used for Beijing-style hotpot, the standard sauce at most *baodu* restaurants," Feng stressed. "In my opinion, the seasoning for *baodu* should be light to give full play of the original flavor of *baodu* itself. The sauce for mutton in hotpot is normally pretty heavy."

Having grown up in a family that depended on making *baodu* for its livelihood, Feng said his main culinary inspiration was his father, Feng Jinsheng.

"I was surrounded by everything about *baodu* when I was young and got so used to it that it was easy for me to learn the skills involved from my father," he recalled.



Yang duren, 48 yuan

Feng said that making *baodu* is not nearly as difficult or mysterious a process as some imagine, but did emphasize that there are two important steps that require solid skills and experienced hands to do correctly.

"Each procedure of making *baodu* is equally important, but washing and boiling are relatively key steps. For washing the tripe, we just use cool tap water with no salt or vinegar added," he explained. "As to the boiling, there are no specific times for different kinds of *baodu*, but keeping a full, rolling boil is crucial. Actual cooking time should be decided by the feel of the *baodu* when it is pushed with a scoop."

Despite such simplicity, (and the fact that *baodu* is stomach, no way around it), Feng's mastery has led the Jinshenglong Restaurant to great success, earning daily turnover of over 10,000 yuan and being named a "China's time-honored brand."

Feng, now 56, hopes someday to pass on the family stomach secrets to his son to unswervingly uphold the Feng *baodu* legacy. "I think some traditional foods, like *baodu*, don't require any further innovation. The model for making *baodu* has been set through centuries of cooking and should be upheld," he said.



Some of Feng Guoming's secret stomach specialties

Photos by Lou Ge/Aily

Exhibitions

Traditional and Modern Times



Three young modern oil painters inspired by the style and spirit of traditional Chinese paintings: Xiao Hong, Pang Yongjie and Ma Mingdong.

Where: Qin Gallery, Huaweili 1-1E, north of Beijing Curio City
When: October 23 - November 11, daily 9:30 am - 6 pm
Admission: free **Tel:** 8779 0458

What is the Best: Pan Yuliang, Qian Ding and others

This exhibition highlights landscape masters Pan Yuliang, Qian Ding, Tang Yihe, Yang Songlin and others.

Where: Soka Art Center, Room 101, Building B, Tianhai Shangwu Dasha, 107 Dongsì Beidajie
When: Till November 18, Tuesday-Sunday, 9 am - 5 pm
Admission: free **Tel:** 6406 5477

History — A Microscopic View

Xie Xiaozhe's first solo exhibition in his home country. The US-based artist deals with the dialectic between the mundane, disposable nature of old newspapers and the significance of the stories they contain. This show features new paintings, photographs, videos and installations.

Where: China Art Archives and Warehouse, Opposite Nangao Police Station, Caochang Dicun, Jichang Fulu
When: Till November 26, Wednesday-Sunday, 1 pm - 6 pm
Admission: free **Tel:** 8456 5152

Transcribe: Sheng Qi

Born in Anhui province, Sheng Qi worked in Italy from 1989-1992. His work deals with the ever-popular subject of the cultural gap between East and West. The artist combines calligraphy with other more western media in an attempt to bridge this gap.

Where: Red Gate Gallery, Dongbianmen Watchtower
When: till November 5, daily 10 am - 5 pm
Admission: free **Tel:** 6525 1005

Oil Painting Exhibition: Zhang Lin and Chen Yu

Zhang Linhai uses striking colours and almost surrealist landscapes to capture the warm and peaceful yet mysterious and dramatic old Chinese village from his memory. Chen Yu's popularity lies in the subtlety of his paintings, which typically illustrate a row of human figures all with eyes closed, except one.

Where: Schoeni Art Gallery, Room 904, level nine, Tower B, New Town Soho, 88 Jianguo Lu.
When: till November 12, Tuesday-Sunday 11 am - 7 pm
Admission: free **Tel:** 8580 2142
Wan Qingli Traditional Chinese Painting

Professor at the Hong Kong Chinese Language University and graduate of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Wan Qingli, is well known as an art theorist. His landscape paintings are now on display at his alma mater.

Where: Central Academy of Fine Arts Gallery, Shuaifuyuan, Wangfujing, 5 Xiaowei Hutong
When: Till November 5, Tuesday-Sunday, 9:30 am - 4 pm
Admission: 5 yuan **Tel:** 6527 7991



Computer programmer Joker, and his younger brother Kid decide to create a virtual world in their house, replete with the 'perfect girl' whom they call Princess D "C modeled on a girl named Ling Ling that Joker met in a bar. This Weird Science rip-off was directed by Hong Kong director, Sylvia Chung. Starring Li Xinjie, Wu Yanzu and Chen Guanxi. Mandarin.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Shuangyushu Kexueyuan, Haidian
When: October 24-30
Admission: 50 yuan **Tel:** 6261 2851

Activities

Speed Dating

You've heard of it elsewhere... now it's coming to Beijing. Spend five minutes or so each with a succession of "potentials," then fill out a form indicating which ones you'd like to see again. An event for those who know what they want!

Where: Pipe's Café, Workers' Stadium south gate, beside Fun Dazzle
When: October 23, 7:30

pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6593 7756

Email:

snubsclub2@hotmail.com

Oi!

Boys and girls, dig up your heels for a night of pure ska, live and canned, with the eight-piece ska band End of the World, and tunes by the likes of Skatalites, Madness, Reel Big Fish and Desmond Dekker. Entry limited to 300.

Where: Vibes, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, just north of Beijing Tokyo Art Projects
When: October 25,



9:30 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan
Tel: 6437 8082

Slab and Bamboo

The Bamboo crew is back again, and bringing with them the international talents of Australian DJ and producer Kasey Taylor, more often seen in spots like Bedrock, Spundae and Ministry of Sound.

Where: The Club, Beisanlitun Nanli, Building 43
When: October 25, 10 pm
Admission: 100 yuan (50 yuan before midnight)
Tel: 6417 7791

Jams



DJ GoGo! — The most popular and most successful Swiss DJ!
DJ Micheal Fresh and DJ De La Bass From "Cheese!"
Where: Club Cloud 9 Building 7 Sanlitun Beijie
When: October 24, 8 pm
Admission: 80 yuan **Tel:** 64178317

Second Hand Rose

Everyone's favorite Dongbei cross-dressers are back again for a little rocking at the Lucky.

Where: Get Lucky Bar, 500 meters east of University of International Business and Economics (Jingmao Daxue) south gate
When: October 25, 9:30 pm
Admission: 40 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9109

Chillout DJs

Cafe Sambal hosts DJs playing chillout tunes to round off your weekend. Starts early and runs late - the way relaxation should be.

Where: Cafe Sambal, 43 Doufu Chi Hutong (east of Jiu Gulou Dajie)
When: October 26, 2 pm - 10 pm
Admission: free **Tel:** 6400 4875

Movies

Yige Dou Buneng Shao (Not One Less)

Rural China in the 1990s was a far cry from its city counterparts. A young girl is made teacher of the local primary school and finds herself tracking down a student who left the school for work in the city. Director Zhang Yimou cast non-professionals for this film. Mandarin with English subtitles.

Where: B2M Bar, Dongpingfang Apartment Block (inside the easternmost gate), next to the Dong River, Andingmenwai
When: October 26 8 pm
Admission: free **Tel:** 6426 1091



Stage

German Week

An opportunity to get acquainted with contemporary German drama. Featuring performances of *White Collar* and *Fire Face*.

Where: People's Art Experimental Theatre, third floor of Capital Theatre, 22 Wangfujing Dajie
When: October 27 - November 3, 7:15 pm
Admission: 80 yuan **Tel:** 6525 0996

Auction

**Shoushan Stone Carving Auction**

China Fujian Shoushan Stone Carving Special Auction. It is the first time has been held a special auction for Shoushan stone carving in Beijing. Totally 261 articles are on the list, including "tian huang qiu yun." The image of this carving was once published as a stamp in 1997, and it is estimated to be worth 8.8 million yuan.

Where: Room 226, General Service Building, China International Exhibition Center, Beisanhuan Donglu, Chaoyang District
When: From 1 pm, today
Tel: 013950202009

Music

Xie Tingfeng (Nicholas Tse)

Nicholas Tse is one of the hottest young stars in Hong Kong and a top-selling singer. Having decided to pursue a career in show business, he left school at 16 and spent a year in Tokyo studying various aspects of music and performance. On his return to Hong Kong, he released his debut CD, *My Attitude*, which quickly became a hit and propelled him to stardom.

Where: Capital Gymnasium, 54 Baishiqiao Lu
When: October 25, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-900 yuan **Tel:** 6833 5552

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation info for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 6590 2529
By Dong Nan

Huayan Si (Huayan Monastery), Datong

The monasteries were named after Huayan, a Buddhist sect established in the Tang Dynasty. There are actually two monasteries sharing the same name, known as the “upper” and “lower” Huayan monasteries(华严寺).

The Da Xiong Bao Dian (Main Hall) of the upper monastery was originally built in 1062, in the Liao Dynasty. Destroyed during a war, it was rebuilt in 1140, in the Jin Dynasty, maintaining the Liao architectural style. It covers an area of 1,473 square meters, the largest of its kind still extant in China.

Unlike most Chinese temple buildings, which face south, the main hall faces east. According to legend, the temple's orientation is a reference to the sun-worshipping Qidan, an ancient tribe that first appeared in the region in 400 BC.

The Bu Jia Jiao Cang Dian (Repository Hall for Buddhist Scriptures) in the lower monastery, constructed in 1038, still retains the architectural style of the Tang Dynasty. The 31 colored sculptured figures inside are rare masterpieces of the Liao Dynasty, and Buddhist sutras preserved in 38 pavilion-like cabinets round the wall are one of the best preserved and most complete sets in China.

Getting there: Take No.



The sculptured figure of the Liao Dynasty in the Bhaga Repository Hall

4 or 17 bus from Datong railway station to Qingnian Gong (Youth Palace) station

Open: 8:30 am – 5:30 pm (upper), 8:00 am – 6:30pm (lower)

Admission: 10 yuan for each.

Xuankong Si (Suspended or Hanging Monastery), Hunyuan County



Xuankong Monastery

Xuankong Monastery (悬空寺) is located five kilometers south of Hunyuan County, at the entrance to Hengshan, one of China's five sacred mountains of Taoism. The monastery was founded in 491 during the Northern Wei period (386-584) and reconstructed from the Tang through to the Qing dynasties. Supported by tens of wooden posts, it lies a third of the way up a vertical cliff in Jinlong Xia (Golden Dragon Gorge).

In former times the monastery lay on the main route between Wutai Mountain, a famous Buddhist shrine, and Datong. It was a convenient resting place for passing pilgrims, and was also considered

important in warding off the influence of the Golden Dragon, believed to cause flooding of the Yellow River, which flows below the cliff.

About 40 buildings remain on the cliff face and slopes, from 26 to 50 meters above the foot of the mountain. It is now a place where Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian temples co-exist.

Getting there: Take the Wutaishan bus from Datong North bus station at 6:30 am (8 yuan) and get off at Hunyuan; then take a taxi (10 yuan) or pedicab (5 yuan) to Xuankong Si.

Open: 7 am – 7 pm

Admission: 45 yuan

Fogong Si Shijia Ta (Sakya Tower of Fogong Monastery), Yingxian County



Sakya Tower of Fogong Monastery

Yingxian Wooden Pagoda (佛宫寺释迦塔) is the oldest and tallest wooden Buddhist pagoda in the world, built in 1056 during the Liao Dynasty.

The structure is octagonal in plan, with two rings of columns 67 meters above the ground. Though it appears from the outside to be a five-storey structure, the pagoda in fact has nine stories, and is built entirely of wood. Constructed with over 50 different kinds of

brackets, the pagoda contains not a single nail or rivet, yet has weathered over 900 years of wind and storm and even earthquakes.

Getting there: Take bus from Datong North bus station at 7:30 am, 9:30 am or 2 pm to Yingxian (10 yuan).

Open: 7 am - 7 pm

Admission: 15 yuan, 36 yuan if you want to climb to the top.

ARCHITECTURAL PILGRIMAGE IN SHANXI

By Yu Shanshan

One of the earliest birthplaces of Chinese civilization, Shanxi is home to a disproportionate number of China's oldest wooden architectural structures.

There are still 106 wooden buildings standing today, predating the Song Dynasty (960 - 1275), more than 70 percent of the total remaining in China. These ancient structures, which have survived centuries of natural and man-made disasters, make Shanxi a treasure house of ancient Chinese architecture.

Between 1933 to 1937, Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin, the renowned architectural historians, visited Shanxi three times. The publication of the results of their investigations, including detailed descriptions of the wooden tower at Fogong Monastery and Foguang Monastery, is regarded as the start of the systematic investigation of Chinese ancient architecture.

Beijing Today introduces a route that takes in the seven major buildings the couple discovered. The journey starts from Datong and, heading south, ends in Yuncheng.

With winter fast approaching, the peak tourist season is over in Shanxi, but for true architecture buffs, this quieter time is ideal for a leisurely appreciation of these extraordinary buildings.

Foguang Si (Foguang Monastery), Wutaishan



The roof ridge tile of the Hall to Manjusri

The Main Hall of Foguang Si (佛光寺), built in 857 in the Tang Dynasty, is the second oldest wooden structure known today (the nearby Nanchan Monastery is the oldest, built in 782, but the scale is much smaller). The enormous dougong (brackets) give the building an overwhelming dignity that is not found in later structures.

There stand two humble, life-sized statues in the main hall, one of a woman, Ning Gongyu, donor of the hall, and the other of Yuan Cheng, the abbot who rebuilt the temple after it was destroyed in 845. On the undersides of the beams are inscriptions written with brush and ink, listing the names of the civil and military officials of the district at the time of the completion of the Hall, and also that of the donor.

The Wenshu Dian, or hall of Manjusri, side hall to the Tang structure in Foguangsi, built in 1137 of Jin Dynasty, is interesting as a unique example of form of interior framing known as Jianzhuzao (column decreased framing). The unusual design allows the span between the central columns at the rear to be widened to about forty-six feet, creating more space for pilgrims inside.

Getting there: Take bus from Datong north bus station at 7:30 am, 9:30 am or 2 pm (40-50 yuan) to Taihuaizhen; then take bus at Wutaishan Bus Station (6-10 yuan), to Doucunzhen, then take a taxi (10 yuan) for the ten minute drive to Foguang Monastery.

Open: 8 am – 6 pm

Admission: 10 yuan

Jin Ci (Jinci Temple), Taiyuan



Moulded lady attendant in the Hall to Holy Mother

Lying at the foot of Xuanweng Mountain, 25 kilometers southwest of Taiyuan, Jin Ci (晋祠) was first built in the 5th century in dedication to

Tang Shuyu, founder of the State of Jin (770-476 BC), in the Spring and Autumn Period. Most of the present temple was built during the Northern Song Dynasty.

The beam rails and stone posts of Shengmu Dian (Holy Mother Hall), the main building, form a spectacular laced pattern. The carved dragons on the wooden pillars in front of the Hall of Holy Mother are the oldest of China's extant wooden carvings.

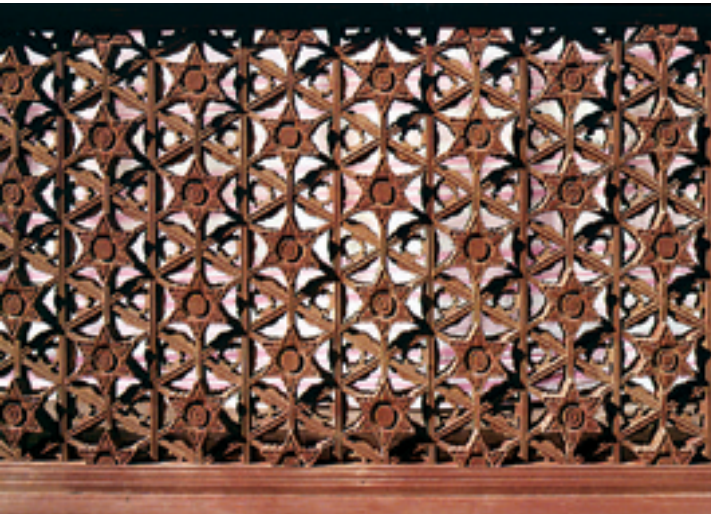
The clay statues of maids from the Song Dynasty in Shengmu Dian, Nan Lao Quan (Ever-Gurgling Immortal Spring, which, in fact, stopped gurgling in 1994), and the Ageless Cypress (a 3,000 year-old cypress planted in the Zhou Dynasty) are known as the “Three Rarities” of Jin Ci. Yu Zhao Fei Liang, a fish pond spanned by a bridge in front of the Holy Mother Hall, built in 1023 in Song Dynasty is also considered a rarity.

Getting there: Take bus from Wutaishan bus station (at Taihuaizhen) between 5:30 am and 4 pm to Taiyuan. Take bus 804 or 408 (both 2 yuan) to Jin Ci Park, then walk across the park to Jin Ci.

Open: 8 am – 6 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Guangsheng Si (Guangsheng Monastery), Hongdong County



The latticed window of Pilu Dian (The Hall to Vairocana) in the upper part of Guangsheng Monastery

Situated at the southern foot of Huoshan Mountain in Hongdong County, Guangsheng Monastery (广胜寺) is divided into the upper and lower parts. The lower part is connected with the Shuishen Miao (Temple to Water God), a separate group of buildings. Most of the buildings were erected in 1305, in the Yuan Dynasty. Feihong Ta (Flying Rainbows Pagoda) in the upper monastery, built in 1515, in the Ming Dynasty, is the biggest and best preserved glazed pagoda in China. Octagonal in plane, built of bricks from top to bottom and glazed in yellow, green, blue, white and brown, the pagoda is just over 47 meters. It is hollow inside, and one can climb to the tenth story.

The frescoes in the Mingying Dian (Hall to King Mingying) in the Temple to the Water God, is the only set of murals in China based not on Buddhist stories, but rather customs of the Yuan Dynasty.

Getting there: Take bus from Taiyuan long distance bus station at 2:15 pm or 3 pm to Hongdong County (46 yuan). Take No. 3 bus (0.5 yuan) from Hongdong bus station to Da-huashu Park, then No. 5 bus (2 yuan) to Guangsheng Monastery station.

Open: 6:30 am – 7:30 pm (upper), 7:30 am – 6:30 pm (lower)

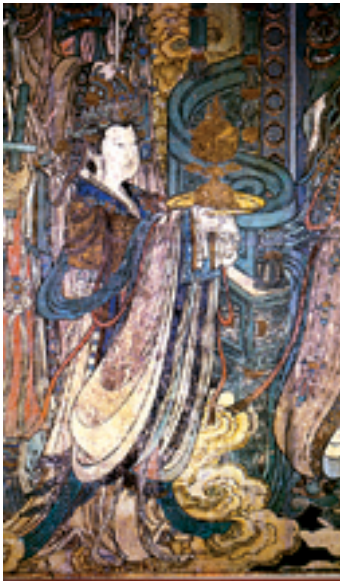
Admission: 16 yuan for upper temple (5 yuan to climb Feihong Pagoda) and 10 yuan for the lower temple.

Yongle Gong (Yongle Palace), Ruicheng County

Yongle Palace (永乐宫) was originally built as a Taoist temple in memory of Lu Dongbin, one of the Ba Xian (Eight Immortals) in Chinese mythology. The palace was later renamed after its location in Yongle. It is renowned for its mural paintings, which are considered treasures of Chinese murals, equal in value to the frescoes of Dunhuang.

The murals painted on the walls of its major halls, such as Sanqing Hall, Chunyang Hall and Chongyang Hall measure 960 square meters in total, and are representative art works of the Yuan Dynasty. They focus on Taoist stories and depict the lives of the immortals, developed from the figure painting styles of the Tang and Song dynasties.

Getting there: Take bus from Linfen long distance bus station between 6:10 am and 6 pm (18 or 23 yuan) to Yuncheng. Take bus from Yuncheng bus



The frescoes of Yongle Palace (detail)

station between 6:10 am and 6:30 pm (10 yuan) to Ruicheng. From there, a cab to the palace costs 3 yuan.

Open: 8 am – 5 pm

Admission: 25 yuan for ticket